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THE  
THEOLOGICAL WORKS  
OF  
ISAAC BARROW, D.D.

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THE  
THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF

L 1466

ISAAC BARROW, D.D.

MASTER OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

IN NINE VOLUMES.

Edited for the Syndics of the University Press

BY

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VOLUME II.

CONTAINING

TWENTY-ONE SERMONS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

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## SERMON XVI.

### AGAINST FOOLISH TALKING AND JESTING.

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EPHES. V. 4.

*Nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient.*

**M**ORAL and political aphorisms are seldom SERM.  
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couched in such terms, that they should be taken as they sound precisely, or according to the widest extent of signification; but do commonly need exposition, and admit exception: otherwise frequently they would not only clash with reason and experience, but interfere, thwart, and supplant one another. The best masters of such wisdom are wont to interdict things, apt by unseasonable or excessive use to be perverted, in general forms of speech, leaving the restrictions, which the case may require or bear, to be made by the hearer's or interpreter's discretion: whence many seemingly formal prohibitions are to be received only as sober cautions. This observation may be particularly supposed applicable to this precept of St Paul, which seemeth universally to forbid a practice commended (in some cases and degrees) by philosophers as virtuous, not disallowed by reason, commonly affected by men, often used by wise and good persons; from which consequently if our religion did wholly debar us, it would seem chargeable with somewhat

## 2      *Against foolish Talking and Jesting.*

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too uncouth austerity and sourness\*: from imputations of which kind, as in its temper and frame it is really most free, (it never quenching natural light, or cancelling the dictates of sound reason, but confirming and improving them;) so it carefully declineth them, enjoining us, that *If there be any things Προσφιλῇ* (lovely, or grateful to men,) *any things Εὖφημα*, (of good report and repute,) *if there be any virtue and any praise*, (any thing in the common apprehensions of men held worthy and laudable,) we should *mind those things*, that is, should yield them a regard answerable to the esteem they carry among rational and sober persons.

Urbanitas

Whence it may seem requisite so to interpret and determine St Paul's meaning here concerning *Εὐτραπεία*, (that is, facetious speech or raillery, by our translators rendered *Jesting*,) that he may consist with himself, and be reconciled to Aristotle, who placeth this practice in the rank of virtues; or that Religion and reason may well accord in the case; supposing, that if there be any kind of facetiousness innocent and reasonable, conformable to good manners, (regulated by common sense, and consistent with the tenour of Christian duty, that is, not transgressing the bounds of piety, charity, and sobriety,) St Paul did not intend to discountenance or prohibit that kind.

For thus expounding and limiting his intent, we have some warrant from himself, some fair intimations in the words here. For first, what sort of

\* Οἱ δὲ μήτ' αὐτοὶ ἂν εἰπόντες μηθὲν γελοῖον τοῖς τε λέγουσι δυσχεραίνοντες ἄγριοι καὶ σκληροὶ δοκοῦσιν εἶναι.—Arist. Eth. iv. [8. 3.]

facetious speech he aimeth at, he doth imply by the fellow he coupleth therewith; *Μωρολογία*, saith he, *ἡ εὐτραπεία*, *Foolish talking*, or *facetiousness*: such facetiousness therefore he toucheth as doth include folly, in the matter or manner thereof. Then he further determineth it, by adjoining a peculiar quality thereof, unprofitableness or impertinency; *Τὰ οὐκ ἀνήκοντα*, *Which are not pertinent*, or conducive to any good purpose: whence may be collected, that it is a frivolous and idle sort of facetiousness which he condemneth.

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But however, manifest it is, that some kind thereof he doth earnestly forbid: whence, in order to the guidance of our practice, it is needful to distinguish the kinds, severing that which is allowable from that which is unlawful; that so we may be satisfied in the case, and not on the one hand ignorantly transgress our duty, nor on the other trouble ourselves with scruples, others with censures, upon the use of warrantable liberty therein.

And such a resolution seemeth indeed especially needful in this our age, (this pleasant and jocular age,) which is so infinitely addicted to this sort of speaking, that it scarce doth affect or prize any thing near so much; all reputation appearing now to vail and stoop to that of being a wit: to be learned, to be wise, to be good, are nothing in comparison thereto; even to be noble and rich are inferior things, and afford no such glory. Many at least, to purchase this glory, to be deemed admirable in this faculty, and enrolled among the wits, do not only make shipwreck of conscience, abandon virtue, and forfeit all pretences to wisdom; but neglect their estates, and prostitute their honour:

4      *Against foolish Talking and Jesting.*

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so to the private damage of many particular persons, and with no small prejudice to the public, are our times possessed and transported with this humour. To repress the excess and extravagance whereof, nothing in way of discourse can serve better, than a plain declaration when, and how, such a practice is allowable or tolerable; when it is wicked and vain, unworthy of a man endued with reason, and pretending to honesty or honour.

This I shall in some measure endeavour to perform.

But first, it may be demanded what the thing we speak of is, or what this facetiousness doth import? To which question I might reply as Democritus did to him that asked the definition of a man, *It is that which we all see and know*: any one better apprehends what it is by acquaintance, than I can inform him by description. It is indeed a thing so versatile and multiform, appearing in so many shapes, so many postures, so many garbs, so variously apprehended by several eyes and judgments, that it seemeth no less hard to settle a clear and certain notion thereof, than to make a portrait of Proteus, or to define the figure of the fleeting air. Sometimes it lieth in pat allusion to a known story, or in seasonable application of a trivial saying, or in forging an apposite tale: sometimes it playeth in words and phrases, taking advantage from the ambiguity of their sense, or the affinity of their sound<sup>b</sup>: sometimes it is wrapped in a dress of humorous expression: sometimes it lurketh under an odd similitude: sometimes it is lodged in

<sup>b</sup> Eadem, quæ, si imprudentibus excidant, stulta sunt; si simulamus, venusta creduntur.—Quint. vi. 3. [23.]

a sly question, in a smart answer, in a quirkish reason, in a shrewd intimation, in cunningly diverting, or cleverly retorting an objection: sometimes it is couched in a bold scheme of speech, in a tart irony, in a lusty hyperbole, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of contradictions, or an acute nonsense: sometimes a scenical representation of persons or things, a counterfeit speech, a mimical look or gesture passeth for it: sometimes an affected simplicity, sometimes a presumptuous bluntness giveth it being: sometimes it riseth from a lucky hitting upon what is strange, sometimes from a crafty wresting obvious matter to the purpose: often it consisteth in one knows not what, and springeth up one can hardly tell how. Its ways are unaccountable and inexplicable, being answerable to the numberless roving of fancy and windings of language. It is, in short, a manner of speaking out of the simple and plain way<sup>c</sup>, (such as reason teacheth and proveth things by,) which, by a pretty surprising uncouthness in conceit or expression, doth affect and amuse the fancy, stirring in it some wonder, and breeding some delight thereto. It raiseth admiration, as signifying a nimble sagacity of apprehension, a special felicity of invention, a vivacity of spirit, and reach of wit more than vulgar: it seeming to argue a rare quickness of parts, that one can fetch in remote conceits applicable; a notable skill, that he can dexterously accommodate them to the purpose before him; together with a lively briskness of humour, not apt to damp those sportful flashes

<sup>c</sup> Et hercle omnis salse dicendi ratio in eo est, ut aliter, quam est rectum verumque, dicatur.—[Id. ibid. § 89.]

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of imagination. (Whence in Aristotle<sup>d</sup> such persons are termed *Ἐπιδέξιοι*, dexterous men; and *Εὔτροποι*, men of facile or versatile manners, who can easily turn themselves to all things, or turn all things to themselves.) It also procureth delight, by gratifying curiosity with its rareness or semblance of difficulty; (as monsters, not for their beauty, but their rarity; as juggling tricks, not for their use, but their abstruseness, are beheld with pleasure;) by diverting the mind from its road of serious thoughts; by instilling gaiety and airiness of spirit; by provoking to such dispositions of spirit, in way of emulation or complaisance; and by seasoning matters, otherwise distasteful or insipid, with an unusual, and thence grateful tang.

But saying no more concerning what it is, and leaving it to your imagination and experience to supply the defect of such explication, I shall address myself to shew, first, when and how, such a manner of speaking may be allowed; then, in what matters and ways it should be condemned.

I Such facetiousness is not absolutely unreasonable or unlawful, which ministereth harmless divertisement and delight to conversation: (harmless, I say, that is, not entrenching upon piety, not infringing charity or justice, not disturbing peace.) For Christianity is not so tetrical, so harsh, so envious, as to bar us continually from innocent, much less from wholesome and useful pleasure, such as human life doth need or require<sup>e</sup>. And if

<sup>d</sup> Eth. iv. 8. [3, 5.]

*Εὐτράπελος λέγεται ὁ ποικίλος, ὁ παντοδαπός, ὁ ἄστατος, ὁ εὐκολος, ὁ πάντα γινόμενος.*—Chrys. in Eph. Or. xvii. [Opp. Tom. III. p. 849.]

<sup>e</sup> *Δοκεῖ δὲ ἡ ἀνάπαυσις καὶ ἡ παιδιὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ εἶναι ἀναγκαῖον.*—Arist. [ubi supra. § 11.]

jocular discourse may serve to good purposes of this kind ; if it may be apt to raise our drooping spirits, to allay our irksome cares, to whet our blunted industry, to recreate our minds being tired and cloyed with graver occupation<sup>f</sup>; if it may breed alacrity, or maintain good humour among us; if it may conduce to sweeten conversation and endear society; then is it not inconvenient or unprofitable. If for those ends we may use other recreations, employing on them our ears and eyes, our hands and feet, our other instruments of sense and motion; why may we not as well to them accommodate our organs of speech and interior sense? Why should those games which excite our wits and fancies be less reasonable, than those whereby our grosser parts and faculties are exercised? Yea, why are not those more reasonable, since they are performed in a manly way, and have in them a smack of reason; seeing also they be so managed, as not only to divert and please, but to improve and profit the mind, rousing and quickening it, yea, sometimes enlightening and instructing it, by good sense conveyed in jocular expression<sup>g</sup>?

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It would surely be hard, that we should be tied ever to knit the brow and squeeze the brain, to be always sadly dumpish, or seriously pensive, that all divertisement of mirth and pleasantness should be shut out of conversation: and how can we better relieve our minds, or relax our thoughts,

<sup>f</sup> Danda est remissio animis; meliores acrioresque requieti surgent, &c.—Sen. de Tranq. xv. [11.]

<sup>g</sup>.

—Ridentem dicere verum

Quid vetat?

[Hor. Sat. i. i. 25.]



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how can we be more ingenuously cheerful, in what more kindly way can we exhilarate ourselves and others, than by thus sacrificing to the graces<sup>h</sup>, as the ancients called it? Are not some persons always, and all persons sometimes, incapable otherwise to divert themselves, than by such discourse? Shall we, I say, have no recreation? or must our recreations be ever clownish or childish, consisting merely in rustical efforts, or in petty sleights of bodily strength and activity? Were we, in fine, obliged ever to talk like philosophers, assigning dry reasons for every thing, and dropping grave sentences upon all occasions, would it not much deaden human life, and make ordinary conversation exceedingly to languish? Facetiousness therefore in such cases, and to such purposes, may be allowable.

2 Facetiousness is allowable, when it is the most proper instrument of exposing things apparently base and vile to due contempt. It is many times expedient, that things really ridiculous should appear such, that they may be sufficiently loathed and shunned; and to render them such is the part of a facetious wit, and usually can only be compassed thereby. When to impugn them with downright reason, or to check them by serious discourse, would signify nothing; then representing them in a shape strangely ugly to the fancy, and thereby raising derision at them, may effectually discountenance them. Thus did the prophet Elias expose the wicked superstition of those who worshipped Baal: *Elias*, saith the text, *mocked*

1 Kings  
xviii. 27.

<sup>h</sup> Θύε ταῖς χάρισι, ita Plato Xenocratem morosiozem monuit.

*them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.* By which one pregnant instance it appeareth, that reasoning pleasantly-abusive in some cases may be useful. The holy scripture doth not indeed use it frequently; (it not suiting the divine simplicity and stately gravity thereof to do so;) yet its condescension thereto at any time sufficiently doth authorize a cautious use thereof. When sarcastical twitches are needful to pierce the thick skins of men, to correct their lethargic stupidity, to rouse them out of their drowsy negligence; then may they well be applied: when plain declarations will not enlighten people, to discern the truth and weight of things, and blunt arguments will not penetrate, to convince or persuade them to their duty; then doth reason freely resign its place to wit, allowing it to undertake its work of instruction and reproof.

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3 Facetious discourse particularly may be commodious for reprovng some vices and reclaiming some persons; (as salt for cleansing and curing some sores.) It commonly procureth a more easy access to the ears of men, and worketh a stronger impression on their hearts, than other discourse could do. Many who will not stand a direct reproof, and cannot abide to be plainly admonished of their fault, will yet endure to be pleasantly rubbed, and will patiently bear a jocund wipe; though they abominate all language purely bitter or sour, yet they can relish discourse having in it a pleasant tartness: you must not chide them as their master, but you may gibe with them as their

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companion : if you do that, they will take you for pragmatical and haughty ; this they may interpret friendship and freedom. Most men are of that temper ; and particularly the genius of divers persons, whose opinions and practices we should strive to correct, doth require, not a grave and severe, but a free and merry way of treating them. For what can be more unsuitable and unpromising, than to seem serious with those who are not so themselves, or demure with the scornful ? If we design either to please or vex them into better manners, we must be as sportful in a manner, or as contemptuous as themselves. If we mean to be heard by them, we must talk in their own fashion, with humour and jollity : if we will instruct them, we must withal somewhat divert them : we must seem to play with them, if we think to convey any sober thoughts into them. They scorn to be formally advised or taught ; but they may perhaps be sily laughed and lured into a better mind. If by such complaisance we can inveigle those dotterels to hearken to us, we may induce them to consider further, and give reason some competent scope, some fair play with them. Good reason may be apparelled in the garb of wit, and therein will securely pass whither in its native homeliness it could never arrive : and being come thither, it with especial advantage may impress good advice ; making an offender more clearly to see, and more deeply to feel his miscarriage ; being represented to his fancy in a strain somewhat rare and remarkable, yet not so fierce and frightful. The severity of reproof is tempered, and the reprover's anger disguised thereby. The guilty per-

son cannot but observe, that he who thus reprehends him is not disturbed or out of humour, and that he rather pitieth than hateth him; which breedeth a veneration to him, and imparteth no small efficacy to his wholesome suggestions. Such a reprehension, while it forceth a smile without, doth work remorse within; while it seemeth to tickle the ear, doth sting the heart. In fine, many whose foreheads are brazed and hearts steeled against all blame, are yet not of proof against derision; divers, who never will be reasoned, may be rallied into better order: in which cases raillery, as an instrument of so important good, as a servant of the best charity, may be allowed.

4 Some errors likewise in this way may be most properly and most successfully confuted; such as deserve not, and hardly can bear a serious and solid confutation. He that will contest things apparently decided by sense and experience, or who disavows clear principles of reason, approved by general consent, and the common sense of men, what other hopeful way is there of proceeding with him, than pleasantly to explode his conceits? To dispute seriously with him were trifling; to trifle with him is the proper course: since he rejecteth the grounds of reasoning, it is vain to be in earnest: what then remains but to jest with him? To deal seriously were to yield too much respect to such a baffler, and too much weight to his fancies; to raise the man too high in his courage and conceit; to make his pretences seem worthy the considering and canvassing. Briefly, perverse obstinacy is more easily quelled, petulant impudence is sooner dashed, sophistical captious-

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ness is more safely eluded, sceptical wantonness is more surely confounded in this, than in the simple way of discourse.

5 This way is also commonly the best way of defence against unjust reproach and obloquy. To yield to a slanderous reviler a serious reply, or to make a formal plea against his charge, doth seem to imply, that we much consider or deeply resent it; whereas by pleasant reflection on it we signify, the matter only deserves contempt, and that we take ourselves unconcerned therein. So easily without care or trouble may the brunts of malice be declined or repelled.

6 This way may be allowed in way of counterbalancing and in compliance to the fashion of others. It would be a disadvantage unto truth and virtue, if their defenders were barred from the use of this weapon; since it is that especially, whereby the patrons of error and vice do maintain and propagate them. They being destitute of good reason, do usually recommend their absurd and pestilent notions by a pleasantness of conceit and expression, bewitching the fancies of shallow hearers, and inveigling heedless persons to a liking of them: and if, for reclaiming such people, the folly of those seducers may in like manner be displayed as ridiculous and odious, why should that advantage be refused? It is wit that wageth the war against reason, against virtue, against religion; wit alone it is that perverteth so many, and so greatly corrupteth the world: it may therefore be needful, in our warfare for those dearest concerns, to sort the manner of our fighting with that of our adversaries, and with the same kind of

arms to protect goodness, whereby they do assail it. If wit may happily serve under the banner of truth and virtue, we may impress it for that service; and good it were to rescue so worthy a faculty from so vile abuse. It is the right of reason and piety to command that and all other endowments; folly and impiety do only usurp them: just and fit therefore it is, to wrest them out of so bad hands, to revoke them to their right use and duty. SERM.  
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It doth especially seem requisite to do it in this age, wherein plain reason is deemed a dull and heavy thing. When the mental appetite of men is become like the corporeal, and cannot relish any food without some piquant sauce, so that people will rather starve than live on solid fare; when substantial and sound discourse findeth small attention or acceptance; in such a time, he that can, may in complaisance, and for fashion's sake, vouchsafe to be facetious: an ingenious vein coupled with an honest mind may be a good talent: he shall employ wit commendably, who by it can further the interests of goodness, alluring men first to listen, then inducing them to consent unto its wholesome dictates and precepts.

Since men are so irreclaimably disposed to mirth and laughter, it may be well to set them in the right pin, to divert their humour into the proper channel, that they may please themselves in deriding things which deserve it, ceasing to laugh at that which requireth reverence or horror.

It may also be expedient to put the world out of conceit, that all sober and good men are a sort of such lumpish or sour people, that they can

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utter nothing but flat and drowsy stuff; by shewing them, that such persons, when they see cause, in condescension, can be as brisk and smart as themselves; when they please, can speak pleasantly and wittily as well as gravely and judiciously. This way at least, in respect to the various palates of men, may, for variety sake, be sometimes attempted, when other means do fail; when many strict and subtle arguings, many zealous declamations, many wholesome, serious discourses have been spent, without effecting the extirpation of bad principles, or conversion of those who abet them; this course may be tried, and some perhaps may be reclaimed thereby.

7 Furthermore, the warrantableness of this practice in some cases may be inferred from a parity of reason, in this manner: If it be lawful, (as by the best authorities it plainly doth appear to be,) in using rhetorical schemes, poetical strains, involutions of sense in allegories, fables, parables, and riddles, to discoast from the plain and simple way of speech; why may not facetiousness, issuing from the same principles, directed to the same ends, serving to like purposes, be likewise used blamelessly? If those exorbitancies of speech may be accommodated to instil good doctrine into the head, to excite good passions in the heart, to illustrate and adorn the truth, in a delightful and taking way; and facetious discourse be sometime notoriously conducive to the same ends; why, they being retained, should it be rejected? especially considering how difficult often it may be, to distinguish those forms of discourse from this, or exactly to define the limits which sever rhetoric

and raillery. Some elegant figures and tropes of rhetoric (biting sarcasms, sly ironies, strong metaphors, lofty hyperboles, paronomasies, oxymorons, and the like, frequently used by the best speakers, and not seldom even by sacred writers) do lie very near upon the confines of jocularità, and are not easily differenced from those sallies of wit, wherein the lepid way doth consist: so that were this wholly culpable, it would be matter of scruple, whether one hath committed a fault or no, when he meant only to play the orator, or the poet; and hard surely it would be to find a judge, who could precisely set out the difference between a jest and a flourish.

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8 I shall only add, that of old even the sagest and gravest persons (persons of most rigid and severe virtue) did much affect this kind of discourse, and did apply it to noble purposes. The great introducer of moral wisdom among the Pagans did practise it so much, (by it repressing the windy pride and fallacious vanity of sophisters in his time,) that he thereby got the name of 'Ο εἴρων, *The droll*: and the rest of those who pursued his design, do, by numberless stories and apophthegms recorded of them, appear well skilled, and much delighted in this way. Many great princes<sup>1</sup>, (as Augustus Cæsar for one, many of whose jests are extant in Macrobius,) many grave statesmen, (as Cicero particularly, who composed several books of jests,) many famous captains, (as Fabius, M. Cato the Censor, Scipio Africanus, Epaminondas, Themistocles, Phocion, and many others, whose witty

<sup>1</sup> Cic. de Orat. II. [54, 216.] [(Jul. Cæsar.) In quibus tu longe aliis, mea sententia, Cæsar, excellis.]



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sayings together with their martial exploits are reported by historians,) have pleased themselves herein, and made it a condiment of their weighty businesses. So that practising thus, within certain rule and compass, we cannot err without great patterns and mighty patrons<sup>k</sup>.

9 In fine, since it cannot be shewn that such a sportfulness of wit and fancy doth contain an intrinsic and inseparable turpitude; since it may be so cleanly, handsomely, and innocently used, as not to defile or discompose the mind of the speaker, not to wrong or harm the hearer, not to derogate from any worthy subject of discourse, not to infringe decency, to disturb peace, to violate any of the grand duties incumbent on us, (piety, charity, justice, sobriety,) but rather sometimes may yield advantage in those respects; it cannot well absolutely and universally be condemned<sup>l</sup>: and when not used upon improper matter, in an unfit manner, with excessive measure, at undue season, to evil purpose, it may be allowed. It is bad objects, or bad adjuncts, which do spoil its indifference and innocence: it is the abuse thereof<sup>m</sup>, to which (as all pleasant things are dangerous, and apt to degenerate into baits of intemperance and excess) it is very liable, that corrupteth it; and seemeth to be the ground, why in so general terms it is prohibited //

<sup>k</sup> The two greatest men and gravest divines of their time (S. Gregory Nazianzene and S. Basil) could entertain one another with facetious epistles. (Σὺ μὲν σκῶπτε, &c. Greg. Naz. [Ep. iv. ad Bas. Opp. Tom. ii. p. 3.] et Ep. v. [Ibid. p. 5.] )

<sup>l</sup> Τὸ γελᾶν, καὶ ἀστεία λέγειν οὐ δοκεῖ μὲν ὁμολογημένον ἁμάρτημα εἶναι, ἄγει δὲ εἰς ὁμολογούμενον ἁμάρτημα.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ιε'. [Opp. Tom. vi. p. 564.]

<sup>m</sup> Ὁ εὐτραπελευόμενος κατήγορος ἔσται ταχέως.—Id. [in. Eph. Or. xvii. Opp. Tom. iii. p. 849.]

by the Apostle. Which prohibition, to what cases or what sorts of jesting it extendeth, we come now to declare. SERM.  
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II. 1 All profane jesting, all speaking loosely and wantonly about holy things, (things nearly related to God and Religion,) making such things the matters of sport and mockery, playing and trifling with them, is certainly prohibited, as an intolerably vain and wicked practice. It is an infallible sign of a vain and light spirit, which considereth little, and cannot distinguish things, to talk slightly concerning persons of high dignity, to whom especial respect is due; or about matters of great importance, which deserve very serious consideration. No man speaketh, or should speak, of his prince that which he hath not weighed, whether it will consist with that veneration which should be preserved inviolate to him: and is not the same, is not much greater care to be used in regard to the incomparably great and glorious Majesty of heaven? Yes, surely: as we should not without great awe think of him, so we should not presume to mention his name, his word, his institutions, any thing immediately belonging to him, without profoundest reverence and dread. It is the most enormous sauciness that can be imagined, to speak petulantly or pertly concerning him; especially considering, that whatever we do say about him, we do utter it in his presence, and to his very face. *For there is not, as the holy Psalmist con-* Ps. cxxxix.  
*sidered, a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou* <sup>4</sup>  
*knowest it altogether.* No man also hath the heart to droll, or thinks raillery convenient in cases nearly touching his life, his health, his estate, or

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his fame: and are the true life and health of our soul, are interest in God's favour and mercy, are everlasting glory and bliss, affairs of less moment? Are the treasures and joys of paradise, or the damages and torments in hell more jesting matters? No certainly, no: in all reason therefore it becometh us, and it infinitely concerneth us, whenever we think of these things, to be in best earnest, always to speak of them in most sober sadness.

The proper objects of common mirth and sportful divertisement are mean and petty matters; any thing at least is by playing therewith made such: great things are thereby diminished and debased; especially sacred things do grievously suffer thence, being with extreme indecency and indignity depressed beneath themselves, when they become the subjects of flashy wit, or the entertainments of frothy merriment: to sacrifice their honour to our vain pleasure, being like the ridiculous fondness of that people, which, as *Ælian* reporteth, worshipping a fly, did offer up an ox thereto. These things were by God instituted, and proposed to us for purposes quite different; to compose our hearts, and settle our fancies in a most serious frame; to breed inward satisfaction, and joy purely spiritual; to exercise our most solemn thoughts, and employ our gravest discourses: all our speech therefore about them should be wholesome, apt to afford good instruction, or to excite good affections; *Good*, as *St Paul* speaketh, *for the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

Tit. ii. 8.

Eph. iv. 29.

If we must be facetious and merry, the field is wide and spacious; there are matters enough in the world beside these most august and dreadful

things, to try our faculties, and please our humour with; every where light and ludicrous things occur: it therefore doth argue a marvellous poverty of wit, and barrenness of invention, no less than a strange defect of goodness, and want of discretion, in those who can devise no other subjects to frolic upon beside these, of all most improper and perilous; who cannot seem ingenious under the charge of so highly trespassing upon decency, disclaiming wisdom, wounding the ears of others, and their own consciences. Seem ingenious, I say; for seldom those persons really are such, or are capable to discover any wit in a wise and manly way. It is not the excellency of their fancies, which in themselves usually are sorry and insipid enough, but the uncouthness of their presumption; not their extraordinary wit, but their prodigious rashness, which is to be admired. They are gazed on, as the doers of bold tricks, who dare perform that which no sober man will attempt: they do indeed rather deserve themselves to be laughed at, than their conceits. For what can be more ridiculous than we do make ourselves, when we thus fiddle and fool with our own souls; when, to make vain people merry, we incense God's earnest displeasure; when, to raise a fit of present laughter, we expose ourselves to endless wailing and woe; when, to be reckoned wits, we prove ourselves stark wild? Surely to this case we may accommodate that of a truly great wit, king Solomon; *I Eccles.ii.2. said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doeth it?*

2 All injurious, abusive, scurrilous jesting, which causelessly or needlessly tendeth to the dis-

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grace, damage, vexation, or prejudice in any kind of our neighbour, (provoking his displeasure, grating on his modesty, stirring passion in him,) is also prohibited<sup>n</sup>. When men, to raise an admiration of their wit, to please themselves, or gratify the humour of other men, do expose their neighbour to scorn and contempt, making ignominious reflections upon his person or his actions, taunting his real imperfections, or fastening imaginary ones upon him, they transgress their duty, and abuse their wits; it is not urbanity, or genuine facetiousness, but uncivil rudeness, or vile malignity<sup>o</sup>. To do thus, as it is the office of mean and base spirits, unfit for any worthy or weighty employments, so it is full of inhumanity, of iniquity, of indecency, and folly. For the weaknesses of men, of what kind soever, (natural or moral, in quality or in act,) considering whence they spring, and how much we are all subject to them, and do need excuse for them, do in equity challenge compassion to be had of them; not complacency to be taken in them, or mirth drawn from them; they, in respect to common humanity, should rather be studiously connived at and concealed, or mildly excused, than wilfully laid open, and wantonly descanted upon; they rather are to be deplored secretly, than openly derided.

The reputation of men is too noble a sacrifice

<sup>n</sup>

——Solutos

Qui captat risus hominum, famamque dicacis;

. . . hic niger est.

Hor. Sat. i. 4. [82.]

<sup>o</sup> 'Ο δὲ βωμολόχος ἥττων ἐστὶ τοῦ γελοίου, καὶ οὔτε ἑαυτοῦ οὔτε τῶν ἄλλων ἀπεχόμενος, εἰ γέλωτα ποιήσῃ.—Arist. Eth. iv. 8, [10.]

to be offered up to vain glory, fond pleasure, or ill humour; it is a good far more dear and precious, than to be prostituted for idle sport and divertisement. It becometh us not to trifle with that, which in common estimation is of so great moment; to play rudely with a thing so very brittle<sup>p</sup>, yet of so vast price; which, being once broken or cracked, it is very hard, and scarce possible to repair. A small transient pleasure, a tickling the ears, wagging the lungs, forming the face into a smile, a giggle, or a hum, are not to be purchased with the grievous distaste and smart, perhaps with the real damage and mischief of our neighbour, which attend upon contempt<sup>q</sup>. This is not jesting surely, but bad earnest: it is wild mirth, which is the mother of grief to those whom we should tenderly love; it is unnatural sport, which breedeth displeasure in them whose delight it should promote, whose liking it should procure: it crosseth the nature and design of this way of speaking; which is to cement and ingratiate society, to render conversation pleasant and sprightly, for mutual satisfaction and comfort.

True festivity is called salt; and such it should be, giving a smart, but savoury relish to discourse; exciting an appetite, not irritating disgust; cleansing sometime, but never creating a sore: and, *Ἐὰν μωρανθῇ, If it become thus insipid, or unsavoury, it* Matt. v. 13. *is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men.* Such jesting,

<sup>p</sup> Vitrea fama.—Hor. [Sat. II. 3. 222.]

<sup>q</sup> Prov. xxvi. 18, 19. *As a mad man, who casteth fire-brands, arrows, and death; so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?* Οἱ ἐνεδρεύοντες τοὺς ἑαυτῶν φίλους.  
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which doth not season wholesome or harmless discourse, but giveth a haut-gout to putid and poisonous stuff, gratifying distempered palates and corrupt stomachs, is indeed odious and despicable folly, to be cast out with loathing, to be trodden under foot with contempt<sup>r</sup>. If a man offends in this sort to please himself, it is scurvy malignity; if to delight others, it is base servility and flattery: upon the first score, he is a buffoon to himself; upon the last, a fool to others. And well in common speech are such practisers so termed, the grounds of that practice being so vain, and the effect so unhappy. *The heart of fools*, saith the Wise Man, *is in the house of mirth*; meaning, it seems, especially such hurtfully-wanton mirth: for it is, as he further tells us, the property of fools to delight in doing harm: *It is a sport to a fool to do mischief*. Is it not in earnest most palpable folly for so mean ends to do so great harm; to disoblige men in sport; to lose friends, and get enemies, for a conceit<sup>s</sup>; out of a light humour to provoke fierce wrath, and breed tough hatred; to engage oneself consequently very far in strife, danger, and trouble? No way certainly is more apt to produce such effects than this; nothing more speedily inflameth, or more tho-

Eccles. vii.  
4.

Prov. x.  
23;  
xiv. 9.

<sup>r</sup> Nimium risus pretium est, si probitatis impendio constat.—  
Quint. [vi. 3. 35.]

Εἰ καλὸν τὸ πρᾶγμα, τί τοῖς μίμοις ἀφίεται; μῖμος γίνῃ, καὶ οὐκ αἰσχύνῃ;—Chrys. [in Eph. Or. xvii. Opp. Tom. iii. p. 849.]

<sup>s</sup> Lædere nunquam velimus, longeque absit propositum illud, potius amicum quam dictum perdendi.—[Quint. ubi supra, § 23.]

Dummodo risum

Excutiat sibi, non hic cuiquam parcat amico.

Hor. Sat. i. 4. [34.]

Dicax idem, et Tiberium acerbis facetiis irridere solitus: quarum apud præpotentes in longum memoria est.—Tac. Ann. [v. 2.]

roughly enrageth men, or sticketh longer in men's hearts and memories, than bitter taunts and scoffs: SERM.  
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whence this honey soon turns into gall; these jolly comedies do commonly terminate in woful tragedies.

Especially this scurrilous and scoffing way is then most detestable, when it not only exposeth the blemishes and infirmities of men, but abuseth piety and virtue themselves; flouting persons for their constancy in devotion, or their strict adherence to a conscientious practice of duty; aiming to effect that which Job complaineth of, *The just upright* Job xii. 4.  
*man is laughed to scorn*; resembling those whom the Psalmist thus describeth, *Who whet their* Ps. lxiiv.  
3, 4.  
*tongue like a sword, and bend their arrows, even bitter words, that they may shoot in secret at the perfect*; serving good men as Jeremy was served, *The word of the Lord, saith he, was made a* Jer. xx. 8.  
*reproach unto me, and a derision daily.*

This practice doth evidently in the highest degree tend to the disparagement and discouragement of goodness; aiming to expose it, and to render men ashamed thereof; and it manifestly proceedeth from a desperate corruption of mind, from a mind hardened and emboldened, sold and enslaved to wickedness: whence they, who deal therein, are in holy scripture represented as egregious sinners, or persons superlatively wicked, under the name of scorers; (*Λοιμοὺς*, pests, or pestilent men, the Greek translators call them, properly enough in regard to the effects of their practice;) concerning whom the Wise Man, signifying how God will mete with them in their own way, saith, *Surely the Lord scorneth the scorers.* Prov. iii.  
34.



## 24 *Against foolish Talking and Jesting.*

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<sup>2</sup> Pet. iii. 3.

Exod. xxii. 28.

This offence also proportionably groweth more criminal, as it presumeth to reach persons eminent in dignity or worth, unto whom special veneration is appropriate. This adjoineth sauciness to scurrility, and advanceth the wrong thereof into a kind of sacrilege. It is not only injustice, but profaneness to abuse the gods. Their station is a sanctuary from all irreverence and reproach; they are seated on high, that we may only look up to them with respect; their defects are not to be seen, or not to be touched by malicious or wanton wits, by spiteful or scornful tongues: the diminution of their credit is a public mischief, and the state itself doth suffer in their becoming objects of scorn; not only themselves are vilified and degraded, but the great affairs they manage are obstructed, the justice they administer is disparaged thereby.

In fine, no jesting is allowable, which is not thoroughly innocent<sup>t</sup>: it is an unworthy perverting of wit, to employ it in biting and scratching; in working prejudice to any man's reputation or interest; in needlessly incensing any man's anger or sorrow; in raising animosities, dissensions, and feuds among any.

Whence it is somewhat strange, that any men

<sup>t</sup> Πόρρω δὲ τοῦτο Χριστιανοῦ, τὸ κωμφεῖν.—Chrys. in Eph. Or. xvii. [Opp. Tom. iii. p. 849.]

Γλῶσσαν ἔχεις, οὐχ ἵνα ἕτερον κωμφοῦσης, ἀλλ' ἵνα εὐχαριστήσης τῷ Θεῷ.—Id. ibid.

from so mean and silly a practice should expect commendation, or that any should afford regard thereto; the which it is so far from meriting, that indeed contempt and abhorrence are due to it. Men do truly more render themselves despicable than others, when, without just ground or reasonable occasion, they do attack others in this way. That such a practice doth ever find any encouragement or acceptance, whence can it proceed, but from the bad nature and small judgment of some persons? For, to any man who is endued with any sense of goodness, and hath a competence of true wit, or a right knowledge of good manners, (who knows—*Inurbanum lepido seponere dicto*," ) it cannot but be unsavoury and loathsome. The repute it obtaineth is in all respects unjust. So would it appear, not only were the cause to be decided in the court of morality, because it consists not with virtue and wisdom; but even before any competent judges of wit itself. For he overthrows his own pretence, and cannot reasonably claim any interest in wit, who doth thus behave himself: he prejudgeth himself to want wit, who cannot descry fit matter to divert himself or others: he discovereth a great straitness and sterility of good invention, who cannot in all the wide field of things find better subjects of discourse; who knows not how to be ingenious within reasonable compass, but to pick up a sorry conceit is forced to make excursions beyond the bounds of honesty and decency.

Neither is it any argument of considerable ability in him that haps to please this way: a slender faculty will serve the turn. The sharpness of

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" Hor. [Ars Poet. 273.]

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his speech cometh not from wit so much as from choler, which furnisheth the lowest inventions with a kind of pungent expression, and giveth an edge to every spiteful word<sup>x</sup>: so that any dull wretch doth seem to scold eloquently and ingeniously. Commonly also satirical taunts do owe their seeming piquancy, not to the speaker or his words, but to the subject and the hearers; the matter conspiring with the bad nature or the vanity of men, who love to laugh at any rate, and to be pleased at the expense of other men's repute; conceiting themselves extolled by the depression of their neighbour, and hoping to gain by his loss. Such customers they are that maintain the bitter wits, who otherwise would want trade, and might go a-begging. For commonly, they who seem to excel this way are miserably flat in other discourse, and most dully serious: they have a particular unaptness to describe any good thing, or commend any worthy person; being destitute of right ideas, and proper terms answerable to such purposes: their representations of that kind are absurd and unhandsome; their eulogies (to use their own way of speaking) are in effect satires, and they can hardly more abuse a man than by attempting to commend him; like those in the Prophet, who were

Jer. iv. 22. *Wise to do ill, but to do well had no knowledge.*

3 I pass by, that it is very culpable to be facetious in obscene and smutty matters. Such things are not to be discoursed on, either in jest  
Eph. v. 3. or in earnest; they must not, as St Paul saith, be

<sup>x</sup> Obtrectatio et livor pronis auribus accipiuntur. Quippe adulationi foedum crimen servitutis, malignitati falsa species libertatis inest.—Tac. Hist. i. init.

so much as named among Christians: to meddle with them is not to disport, but to defile oneself and others. There is indeed no more certain sign of a mind utterly debauched from piety and virtue, than affecting such talk. But further,

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4 All unseasonable jesting is blameable. As there are some proper seasons of relaxation, when we may *Desipere in loco*<sup>y</sup>; so are there some times and circumstances of things, wherein it concerneth and becometh men to be serious in mind, grave in demeanour, and plain in discourse; when to sport in this way is to do indecently, or uncivilly, to be impertinent, or troublesome<sup>z</sup>.

It comporteth not well with the presence of superiors, before whom it becometh us to be composed and modest: much less with the performance of sacred offices, which require an earnest attention, and most serious frame of mind.

In deliberations and debates about affairs of great importance, the simple manner of speaking to the point is the proper, easy, clear, and compendious way: facetious speech there serves only to obstruct and entangle business, to lose time, and protract the result<sup>a</sup>. The shop and exchange will scarce endure jesting in their lower transactions: the senate, the court of justice, the church do much more exclude it from their more weighty consultations. Whenever it justleth out, or hindereth the

<sup>y</sup> [Hor. Carm. iv. 12, 28.]

<sup>z</sup> Vitandum ne petulans, ne superbum, ne loco, ne tempore alienum, ne præparatum et domo allatum videatur, quod dicimus.—Quint. [vi. 3. 33.]

<sup>a</sup> Μή μοι τὰ κομψὰ ποικίλοι γενοίαιτο,  
Ἄλλ' ὧν πόλει δεῖ.—Eurip. [Æol. Frag. vi. 2.]

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dispatch of other serious business, taking up the room, or swallowing the time due to it, or indisposing the minds of the audience to attend it, then it is unseasonable and pestilent. Παίζειν, ὅπως σπουδάζῃ, *To play, that we may be seriously busy*, is the good rule of Anacharsis<sup>b</sup>, implying the subordination of sport to business, as a condiment and furtherance, not an impediment or clog thereto. He that for his sport neglects his business, deserves indeed to be reckoned among children; and children's fortune will attend him, to be pleased with toys, and to fail of substantial profit.

It is, again, improper (because indeed uncivil and inhuman) to jest with persons that are in a sad or afflicted condition<sup>c</sup>; as arguing want of due considering or due commiserating their case: it appears a kind of insulting upon their misfortune, and is apt to foment their grief. Even in our own case, upon any disastrous occurrence to ourselves, it would not be seemly to frolic it thus; it would signify want of due regard to the frowns of God, and the strokes of his hand; it would cross the

Eccles. vii.  
14.

Wise Man's advice, *In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider.*

It is also not seasonable, or civil, to be jocund in this way with those who desire to be serious, and like not the humour. Jocularities should not be forcibly obtruded, but by a kindly conspiracy, or tacit compact, slip into conversation: consent and complaisance give all the life thereto. Its design is to sweeten and ease society; when to the

<sup>b</sup> Apud Arist. Eth. x. 6, [6.]

<sup>c</sup> Adversus miseros——inhumanus est jocus.—Quint. [vi. 3. 33.]

contrary it breedeth offence or incumbrance, it is worse than vain and unprofitable. From these instances we may collect when, in other like cases, it is unseasonable, and therefore culpable. Further,

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5 To affect, admire, or highly to value this way of speaking, either absolutely in itself, or in comparison to the serious and plain way of speech, and thence to be drawn into an immoderate use thereof, is blameable. A man of ripe age, and sound judgment, for refreshment to himself, or in complaisance to others, may sometimes condescend to play in this or in any other harmless way: but to be fond of it, to prosecute it with a careful or painful eagerness, to doat and dwell upon it, to reckon it a brave or a fine thing, a singular matter of commendation, a transcendent accomplishment, anywise preferable to rational endowments, or comparable to the moral excellencies of our mind, (to solid knowledge, or sound wisdom, or true virtue and goodness,) this is extremely childish, or brutish, and far below a man. What can be more absurd, than to make a business of play, to be studious and laborious in toys, to make a profession or drive a trade of impertinency<sup>d</sup>? what more plain nonsense can there be, than to be earnest in jest, to be continual in divertisement, or constant in pastime; to make extravagance all our way, and sauce all our diet? Is not this plainly the life of a child, that is ever busy, yet never hath any thing to do? or the life of that mimical brute, which is always active in playing uncouth and unlucky

<sup>d</sup> Σπουδάζειν καὶ ποιεῖν παιδιᾶς χάριν, ἡλίθιον φαίνεται, καὶ λίαν παιδικόν.—Arist. Eth. x. 6, [6.]

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The proper work of man, the grand drift of human life, is to follow reason, (that noble spark kindled in us from heaven; that princely and powerful faculty, which is able to reach so lofty objects, and to achieve so mighty works;) not to soothe fancy, that brutish, shallow, and giddy power, able to perform nothing worthy much regard. *We are not, even Cicero could tell us, born for play and jesting; but for severity, and the study of graver and greater affairs*<sup>\*</sup>. Yes, we were purposely designed, and fitly framed, to understand and contemplate, to affect and delight in, to undertake and pursue most noble and worthy things; to be employed in business considerably profitable to ourselves, and beneficial to others: we do therefore strangely debase ourselves, when we do strongly bend our minds to, or set our affections upon such toys.

Especially to do so is unworthy of a Christian; that is, of a person who is advanced to so high a rank, and so glorious relations; who hath so excellent objects of his mind and affections presented before him, and so excellent rewards for his care and pains proposed to him; who is engaged in affairs of so worthy nature, and so immense consequence: for him to be zealous about quibbles, for him to be ravished with puny conceits and expressions, it is a wondrous oversight, and an enormous indecency.

He indeed that prefers any faculty to reason,

<sup>\*</sup> Neque enim ita generati a natura sumus, ut ad ludum et jocum facti esse videamur, ad severitatem potius, et ad quædam studia graviora atque majora.—Cic. Off. I. [29, 103.]

disclaims the privilege of being a man, and under-  
stands not the worth of his own nature; he that SERM.  
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prizes any quality beyond virtue and goodness,  
renounces the title of a Christian, and knows not  
how to value the dignity of his profession. It is  
these two, reason and virtue, in conjunction, which  
produce all that is considerably good and great in  
the world. Fancy can do little; doeth never any  
thing well, except as directed and wielded by them.  
Do pretty conceits or humorous talk carry on  
any business, or perform any work? No; they  
are ineffectual and fruitless: often they disturb,  
but they never dispatch any thing with good suc-  
cess. It is simple reason, as dull and dry as it  
seemeth, which expediteth all the grand affairs,  
which accomplisheth all the mighty works that  
we see done in the world. In truth, therefore, as  
one diamond is worth numberless bits of glass; so  
one solid reason is worth innumerable fancies: one  
grain of true science and sound wisdom in real  
worth and use doth outweigh loads, if any loads  
can be, of freakish wit. To rate things otherwise  
doth argue great weakness of judgment, and fond-  
ness of mind. So to conceit of this way signifieth  
a weak mind; and much to delight therein render-  
eth it so: nothing more debaseth the spirit of a  
man, or more rendereth it light and trifling<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>f</sup> Ὡς μὴ συμβαίνειν κατὰ ταῦτόν, ψυχῆς νῆψιν καὶ εὐτραπείας διά-  
χυσιν.—Bas. Const. Mon. [cap. xii. Opp. Tom. ii. p. 557.]

Πολλὰ γὰρ συμβαίνει τοὺς περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀσχολουμένους, τοῦ  
ὀρθοῦ λόγου διαμαρτάνειν, τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς γελοιασμόν διαχεομένης, καὶ  
τὸ τῆς φρονήσεως σύννον καὶ πεπυκνωμένον καταλύουσης.—Id. Ibid.

Jocorum frequens usus omne animis pondus, omnemque vim  
eripiet.—Sen. de Tranq. xv. [12.]

Ἡ εὐτραπεία μαλακὴν ποιεῖ τὴν ψυχὴν, ῥαθυμόν, ἀναπεπτωκυῖαν.—  
Chrys. in Eph. Or. xvii. [Opp. Tom. iii. p. 848.]



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Hence if we must be venting pleasant conceits, we should do it, as if we did it not, carelessly and unconcernedly; not standing upon it, or valuing ourselves for it: we should do it with measure and moderation; not giving up ourselves thereto, so as to mind it, or delight in it more than in any other thing: we should not be so intent upon it, as to become remiss in affairs more proper or needful for us; so as to nauseate serious business, or disrelish the more worthy entertainments of our minds. This is the great danger of it, which we daily see men to incur; they are so bewitched with a humour of being witty themselves, or of hearkening to the fancies of others, that it is this only which they can like or savour, which they can endure to think or talk of. It is a great pity, that men, who would seem to have so much wit, should so little understand themselves. But further,

6 Vain-glorious ostentation this way is very blameable. All ambition, all vanity, all conceitedness, upon whatever ground they are founded, are absolutely unreasonable and silly: but yet those, being grounded on some real ability, or some useful skill, are wise and manly in comparison to this, which standeth on a foundation so manifestly slight and weak. The old philosophers by a severe father were called *Animalia gloriæ*, *animals of glory*<sup>s</sup>; and by a satirical poet they were termed *Bladders of vanity*<sup>h</sup>: but they at least did catch at

<sup>s</sup> Tertul. [de Anima. cap. 1. Opp. p. 264 B. Verbatim. Philosophus gloriæ animal.]

<sup>h</sup> Ἄνθρωποι κενεῆς οἰήσεως ἔμπλεοι ἄσκοι.—Timon. [Brunck. Anal. Tom. II. p. 68.]

praise from praiseworthy knowledge; they were puffed up with a wind which blowed some good to mankind; they sought glory from that which deserved glory, if they had not sought it; it was a substantial and solid credit which they did affect, resulting from successful enterprises of strong reason and stout industry: but these *Animalcula gloriæ*, these flies, these insects of glory, these, not bladders, but bubbles of vanity, would be admired and praised, for that which is nowise admirable or laudable<sup>1</sup>; for the casual hits and emergencies of roving fancy; for stumbling on an odd conceit or phrase, which signifieth nothing, and is as superficial as the smile, as hollow as the noise it causeth. Nothing certainly in nature is more ridiculous than a self-conceited wit, who deemeth himself somebody, and greatly pretendeth to commendation, from so pitiful and worthless a thing as a knack of trifling.

7 Lastly, it is our duty never so far to engage ourselves in this way, as thereby to lose, or to impair that habitual seriousness, modesty, and sobriety of mind, that steady composedness, gravity, and constancy of demeanour, which become Christians. We should continually keep our minds Phil. iii. 14. intent upon our high calling, and grand interests; ever well tuned and ready for the performance of holy devotions, and the practice of most serious duties with earnest attention and fervent affection: wherefore we should never suffer them to be dissolved into levity, or disordered into a wanton frame, indisposing us for religious thoughts and

<sup>1</sup> *Risum quæsit, qui est, mea sententia, vel tenuissimus ingenii fructus.*—Cic. de Orat. II. [60, 247.]

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Phil. iv. 8.  
1 Tim. iii. 8.

Tit. ii. 10.

actions. We ought always in our behaviour to maintain, not only Τὸ πρέπον, a fitting decency, but also Τὸ σεμνὸν, a stately gravity, a kind of venerable majesty, suitable to that high rank which we bear of God's friends and children; adorning our holy profession, and guarding us from all impressions of sinful vanity<sup>k</sup>. Wherefore we should not let ourselves be transported into any excessive pitch of lightness, inconsistent with, or prejudicial to, our Christian state and business. Gravity and modesty are the fences of piety, which being once slighted, sin will easily attempt and encroach upon us. [So the old Spanish gentleman may be interpreted to have been wise, who, when his son upon a voyage to the Indies, took his leave of him, gave him this odd advice; *My son, in the first place keep thy gravity, in the next place fear God*<sup>l</sup>: intimating, that a man must first be serious before he can be pious.]

To conclude, as we need not be demure, so must we not be impudent; as we should not be sour, so ought we not to be fond; as we may be free, so we should not be vain; as we may well stoop to friendly complaisance, so we should take heed of falling into contemptible levity. If without wronging others, or derogating from ourselves, we can be facetious; if we can use our wits in jesting innocently and conveniently; we may sometimes do it: but let us, in compliance with St Paul's direction,

<sup>k</sup> Dictum potius aliquando perdet quam minuet auctoritatem.—  
Quint. vi. [3, 30.]

<sup>l</sup> Infam. Famiani. [Hyo, te enconcienda la gravedad, y despues e temor de Dios: id est, Fili, gravitatem in primis tibi cordi esse monco, proxime Dei metum.—Scioppii Infamia Famiani, p. 228. Soræ. 1653.]

beware of *Foolish talking and jesting, which are* SERM.  
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*not convenient.*

*Now the God of grace and peace make us per-* Heb. xiii.  
20, 21.  
*fect in every good work to do his will, working in*  
*us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through*  
*Jesus Christ ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.*  
*Amen.*

## SERMON XVII.

### AGAINST RASH AND VAIN SWEARING.

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JAMES V. 12.

*But above all things, my brethren, swear not.*

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**A**MONG other precepts of good life, (directing the practice of virtue and abstinence from sin,) St James doth insert this about swearing, couched in expression denoting his great earnestness, and apt to excite our special attention. Therein he doth not mean universally to interdict the use of oaths; (for that in some cases is not only lawful, but very expedient; yea needful, and required from us as a duty;) but that swearing which our Lord had expressly prohibited to his disciples, and which thence, questionless, the brethren to whom St James did write, did well understand themselves obliged to forbear, having learnt so in the first catechisms of Christian institution; that is, needless and heedless swearing in ordinary conversation: a practice then frequented in the world, both among Jews and Gentiles; the which also, to the shame of our age, is now so much in fashion, and with some men in vogue; the invoking God's name, appealing to his testimony, and provoking his judgment, upon any slight occasion, in common talk, with vain incogitancy, or profane boldness. From such practice the holy apostle dehortheth in

terms importing his great concernedness, and implying the matter to be of highest importance: for, *Πρὸ πάντων*, saith he, *Before all things, my brethren, do not swear*; as if he did apprehend this sin of all other to be one of the most heinous and pernicious. Could he have said more? would he have said so much, if he had not conceived the matter to be of exceeding weight and consequence? And that it is so, I mean now, by God's help, to shew you, by proposing some considerations, whereby the heinous wickedness, together with the monstrous folly, of such rash and vain swearing will appear; the which, being laid to heart will, I hope, effectually dissuade and deter from it.

I. Let us consider the nature of an oath, and what we do, when we adventure to swear.

Exod. xx.

It is (as it is phrased in the Decalogue, and elsewhere in holy scripture) an assuming the name of our God, and applying it to our purpose, to countenance and confirm what we say<sup>a</sup>.

7.  
Prov. xxx.

9.  
Gen. xxxi.

50.  
Judg. xi.

10.  
1 Sam. xii.

5.  
Jer. xlii. 5.

Job xvi. 19.

Mal. iii. 5.

1 John v. 9.

Gen. xxxi.

53.  
1 Sam.

xxiv. 15.

1 Kings

viii. 31, 32;

ii. 23; xix.

2; xx. 10.

Neh. v. 12,

13.  
Ruth i. 17.

2 Kings vi.

It is an invocation of God, as a most faithful witness, concerning the truth of our words, or the sincerity of our meaning.

It is an appeal to God, as a most upright Judge, whether we do prevaricate in asserting what we do not believe true, or in promising what we are not firmly resolved to perform.

It is a formal engagement of God, to be the avenger of our trespassing in violation of truth or faith.

It is a binding our souls<sup>b</sup>, with a most strict

31.  
2 Sam. iii.

9, 35; xix.

13.  
1 Sam. xiv.

44; iii. 17;

xx. 13.  
Numb.

xxx. 2.

<sup>a</sup> Plurima firmanur jurejurando——diis immortalibus interpositis tum iudiciis, tum testibus.—Cic. de Leg. ii. [7, 16.]

<sup>b</sup> Πᾶς ὄρκος εἰς κατάραν τελευτᾷ τῆς ἐπιρκίας.—Plut. in capit. Rom. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 491. Ed. Steph.]

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and solemn obligation, to answer before God, and to undergo the issue of his judgment about what we affirm or undertake.

Such, an oath is represented to us in holy scripture.

Whence we may collect, that swearing doth require great modesty and composedness of spirit, very serious consideration and solicitous care, that we be not rude and saucy with God, in taking up his name, and prostituting it to vile or mean uses; that we do not abuse or debase his authority, by citing it to aver falsehoods or impertinences; that we do not slight his venerable justice, by rashly provoking it against us; that we do not precipitantly throw our souls into most dangerous snares and intricacies.

For let us reflect and consider: what a presumption is it, without due regard and reverence, to lay hold on God's name; with unhallowed breath to vent and toss that great and glorious, that most holy, that reverend, that fearful and terrible name of the Lord our God, the great Creator, the mighty Sovereign, the dreadful Judge of all the world; that name which all heaven with profoundest submission doth adore, which the angelical powers, the brightest and purest Seraphim, without hiding their faces, and reverential horror, cannot utter or hear<sup>c</sup>; the very thought whereof should strike awe through our hearts, the mention whereof would make any sober man to tremble; *For how, saith St Chrysostom, is it not absurd, that a servant should not dare to call his master by name, or bluntly and ordinarily to mention him; yet that we*

Ps. xcix. 3;  
cxi. 9;  
cxlvi. 13.  
Deut.  
xxviii. 58.

Isai. vi. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Chrys. *Ἀνθρ.* ζ'. [Opp. Tom. vi. p. 514.]

*slightly and contemptuously should in our mouth  
toss about the Lord of angels<sup>d</sup>?* SERM.  
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*How is it not absurd, if we have a garment  
better than the rest, that we forbear to use it conti-  
nually; but in the most slight and common way do  
wear the name of God<sup>e</sup>?*

How grievous indecency is it, at every turn to  
summon our Maker, and call down Almighty God  
from heaven, to attend our leisure, to vouch our  
idle prattle, to second our giddy passions, to con-  
cern his truth, his justice, his power in our trivial  
affairs!

What a wildness is it, to dally with that judg-  
ment upon which the eternal doom of all creatures  
dependeth, at which *The pillars of heaven are* Job xxvi.  
11.  
*astonished*, which hurled down legions of angels  
from the top of heaven and happiness into the bot-  
tomless dungeon; the which, as grievous sinners,  
of all things we have most reason to dread; and  
about which no sober man can otherwise think,  
than did that great king, the holy Psalmist, who  
said, *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am* Ps. cxix.  
130.  
*afraid of thy judgments!*

How prodigious a madness is it, without any  
constraint or needful cause, to incur so horrible  
danger, to rush upon a curse; to defy that ven-  
geance, the least touch or breath whereof can dash  
us to nothing, or thrust us down into extreme and  
endless woe!

<sup>d</sup> [Πῶς γὰρ οὐκ ἄτοπον, οἰκέτην μὲν μὴ τολμᾶν ἐξ ὀνόματος τὸν  
δεσπότην τὸν ἑαυτοῦ καλεῖν, μηδὲ ἀπλῶς καὶ ὡς ἔτυχε, τὸν δὲ τῶν  
ἀγγέλων δεσπότην ἀπλῶς καὶ μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς καταφρονήσεως παντα-  
χοῦ περιφέρειν;] Ibid.

<sup>e</sup> [Πῶς γὰρ οὐκ ἄτοπον, ἱμάτιον μὲν ἔχοντας τῶν λοιπῶν βέλτιον,  
μὴ ἀνέχεσθαι συνεχῶς αὐτῷ καταχρᾶσθαι, τὸ δὲ τοῦ Θεοῦ ὄνομα παντα-  
χοῦ περισύρειν ἀπλῶς καὶ ὡς ἔτυχε;] Id. Ανδρ. θ. p. 525.



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Who can express the wretchedness of that folly, which so entangleth us with inextricable knots, and chaineth our souls so rashly with desperate obligations?

Wherefore, he that would but a little mind what he doeth, when he dareth to swear, what it is to meddle with the adorable name, the venerable testimony, the formidable judgment, the terrible vengeance of the divine Majesty, into what a case he putteth himself, how extreme hazard he runneth thereby, would assuredly have little heart to swear, without greatest reason, and most urgent need; hardly without trembling would he undertake the most necessary and solemn oath; much cause would he see *Σέβεσθαι ὄρκον*, *to adore, to fear an oath*: which to do, the divine Preacher maketh the character of a good man; *As, saith he, is the good, so is the sinner, and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.*

Eccles. ix.  
2.

In fine, even a heathen philosopher, considering the nature of an oath, did conclude the unlawfulness thereof in such cases. For, *Seeing, saith he, an oath doth call God for witness, and proposeth him for umpire and voucher of the things it saith; therefore to induce God so, upon occasion of human affairs, or, which is all one, upon small and slight accounts, doth imply contempt of him: wherefore we ought wholly to shun swearing, except upon occasions of highest necessity<sup>1</sup>.*

II. We may consider, that swearing, (agree-

<sup>1</sup> Ὁ γὰρ ὄρκος μάρτυρα τὸν Θεὸν καλεῖ, καὶ μεσίτην αὐτὸν καὶ ἐγγυητὴν ἐφ' οἷς λέγει προϊσχεται. τὸ γοῦν ἐπ' ἀνθρωπίνους πράγμασι (ταυτὸν δὲ εἰπεῖν, μικροῖς καὶ εὐτελέσι) τὸν Θεὸν παράγειν, καταφρόνησιν τινα πρὸς αὐτὸν ὑπογράφει. διὸ χρή παραιτεῖσθαι τὸν ὄρκον, εἰ μὲν δυνατόν, τελέως.—Simpl. in Epict. Ench. cap. xlv.

ably to its nature, or natural aptitude and tendency,) is represented in holy scripture as a special SERM.  
XVII. part of religious worship, or devotion toward God; in the due performance whereof, we do avow him for the true God and Governor of the world; we piously do acknowledge his principal attributes and special prerogatives; his omnipresence and omniscience, extending itself to our most inward thoughts, our secretest purposes, our closest retirements; his watchful providence over all our actions, affairs, and concerns; his faithful goodness, in favouring truth and protecting right; his exact justice, in patronising sincerity, and chastising perfidiousness; his being supreme Lord over all persons, and Judge paramount in all causes; his readiness in our need, upon our humble imploration and reference, to undertake the arbitration of matters controverted, and the care of administering justice, for the maintenance of truth and right, of loyalty and fidelity, of order and peace among men. Swearing doth also intimate a pious trust and confidence in God; as Aristotle observeth<sup>s</sup>.

Such things a serious oath doth imply, to such purposes swearing naturally serveth; and therefore to signify or effectuate them, divine institution hath devoted it.

God, in goodness to such ends, hath pleased to lend us his great name; allowing us to cite him for a witness, to have recourse to his bar, to engage his justice and power, whenever the case deserveth and requireth it, or when we cannot by other means

<sup>s</sup> Εὐσεβὲς τὸ θέλειν τοῖς θεοῖς ἐπιτρέπειν.—Arist. Rhet. 1. [15, 31.] *It is a pious thing willingly to commend our case or controversy to God.*

SERM. XVII. well assure the sincerity of our meaning, or secure the constancy of our resolutions.

Deut. x.  
20; vi. 13.

Ps. lxiii.  
11.

Jer. xii. 16.

Isai. xlv.  
23.  
lxv. 16.

Yea, in such exigences he doth exact this practice from us, as an instance of our religious confidence in him, and as a service conducive to his glory: for it is a precept in his law, of moral nature, and eternal obligation, *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and shalt swear by his name.* It is the character of a religious man to swear with due reverence and upright conscience. For, *The king, saith the Psalmist, shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.* It is a distinctive mark of God's people, according to that of the prophet Jeremy, *And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name—then shall they be built in the midst of my people.* It is predicted concerning the evangelical times, *Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear: and, That he who blesseth himself in the earth, shall bless himself by the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth, shall swear by the God of truth.*

As, therefore, all other acts of devotion, wherein immediate application is made to the divine Majesty, should never be performed without most hearty intention, most serious consideration, most lowly reverence; so, neither should this grand one, wherein God is so nearly touched, and his chief attributes so much concerned: the which indeed doth involve both prayer and praise, doth require the most devotional acts of faith and fear.

We therefore should so perform it, as not to

incur that reproof; *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.*

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Matt. xv.  
8.

Isai. xxix.  
13.

When we seem most formally to avow God, to confess his omniscience, to confide in his justice; we should not really disregard him, and in effect signify, that we do not think he doth know what we say, or mind what we do.

If we do presume to offer this service, we should do it, in the manner appointed by himself, according to the conditions prescribed in the Prophet, *Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness: In truth,* taking heed that our meaning be conformable to the sense of our words, and our words to the verity of things; *In judgment,* having with careful deliberation examined and weighed that, which we assert or promise; *In righteousness,* being satisfied in conscience, that we do not therein infringe any rule of piety toward God, of equity toward men, of sobriety and discretion in regard to ourselves.

Jer. iv. 2.

The cause of our swearing must be needful, or very expedient; the design of it must be honest and useful to considerable purposes; (tending to God's honour, our neighbour's benefit, our own welfare;) the matter of it should be, not only just and lawful, but worthy and weighty; the manner ought to be grave and solemn, our mind being framed to earnest attention, and endued with pious affections suitable to the occasion.

Otherwise, if we do venture to swear, without due advice and care, without much respect and awe, upon any slight or vain (not to say bad or unlawful) occasion; we then desecrate swearing,

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XVII.Matt. xv.  
7, 8.

and are guilty of profaning a most sacred ordinance: the doing so doth imply base hypocrisy, or lewd mockery, or abominable wantonness and folly; in boldly invading, and vainly trifling with the most august duties of religion. Such swearing therefore is very dishonourable and injurious to God, very prejudicial to religion, very repugnant to piety.

III. We may consider, that the swearing prohibited is very noxious to human society.

The great prop of society, (which upholdeth the safety, peace, and welfare thereof, in observing laws, dispensing justice, discharging trusts, keeping contracts, and holding good correspondence mutually,) is conscience, or a sense of duty toward God, obliging to perform what is right and equal; quickened by hope of rewards, and fear of punishments from him: secluding which principle, no worldly consideration is strong enough to hold men fast; or can further dispose many to do right, or observe faith, or hold peace, than appetite, or interest, or humour, (things very slippery and uncertain,) do sway them.

That men should live honestly, quietly, and comfortably together, it is needful that they should live under a sense of God's will, and in awe of the divine power, hoping to please God, and fearing to offend him, by their behaviour respectively.

That justice should be administered between men, it is necessary that testimonies of fact be alleged; and that witnesses should apprehend themselves greatly obliged to discover the truth, according to their conscience, in dark and doubtful cases.

That men should uprightly discharge offices serviceable to public good, it doth behove, that they be firmly engaged to perform the trusts reposed in them. SERM.  
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That, in affairs of very considerable importance, men should deal with one another with satisfaction of mind and mutual confidence, they must receive competent assurances concerning the integrity, fidelity, and constancy each of other.

That the safety of governors may be preserved, and the obedience due to them maintained secure from attempts to which they are liable, (by the treachery, levity, perverseness, timorousness, ambition, all such lusts and ill humours of men,) it is expedient that men should be tied with the strictest bands of allegiance.

That controversies emergent about the interests of men should be determined, and an end put to strife by peremptory and satisfactory means, is plainly necessary for common quiet.

Wherefore, for the public interest and benefit of human society, it is requisite that the highest obligations possible should be laid upon the consciences of men.

And such are those of oaths, engaging them to fidelity and constancy in all such cases, out of regard to Almighty God, as the infallible patron of truth and right, the unavoidable chastiser of perfidiousness and improbity.

To such purposes therefore, oaths have ever been applied, as the most effectual instruments of working them; not only among the followers of true and perfect Religion, but even among all those who had any glimmering notions concerning

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a divine power and providence; who have deemed an oath the safest tie of conscience, and held the violation of it for the most detestable impiety and iniquity. So that what Cicero saith of the Romans, *That their ancestors had no band to constrain faith more strait than an oath*<sup>b</sup>, is true of all other nations; common reason not being able to devise any engagement more obliging than it; it being in the nature of things *Τελευταία πίστις*, and *Ὁχυρώτατον ἀληθείας ἐνέχυρον*, the utmost assurance, the last resort of human faith, the surest pledge that any man can yield of his trustiness<sup>1</sup>. Hence ever in transactions of highest moment, this hath been used to bind the faith of men.

Hereby nations have been wont to ratify leagues of peace and amity between each other: (which therefore the Greeks called *Ὀρκία*<sup>k</sup>.)

Hereby princes have obliged their subjects to loyalty: and it hath ever been the strongest argument to press that duty, which the Preacher useth; *I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God.*

Eccles. viii.  
2.

Hereby generals have engaged their soldiers to stick close to them<sup>1</sup>, in bearing hardships and encountering dangers.

Hereby the nuptial league hath been confirmed; the solemnization whereof in temples before God is in effect a most sacred oath.

Hereon the decision of the greatest causes concerning the lives, estates, and reputations of men

<sup>b</sup> Nullum enim vinculum ad adstringendam fidem jurejurando majores arctius esse voluerunt.—De Off. III. [31, 111.]

<sup>1</sup> Dion. Halic. Procop. Diod. Sic.

<sup>k</sup> Πρὸς ἄς (πολεῖς) ἔχουσιν ὀρκία.—Polyb. [vi. 14, 8.]

<sup>1</sup> Veget. [de Re Mil. Lib. II. cap. 5.]

have depended; so that, as the Apostle saith, *An oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.* SERM.  
XVII.  
Heb. vi. 16.

Indeed, such hath the need hereof been ever apprehended, that we may observe, in cases of great importance, no other obligation hath been admitted for sufficient to bind the fidelity and constancy of the most credible persons; so that, even the best men hardly could trust the best men without it. For instance,

When Abimelech would assure to himself the friendship of Abraham, although he knew him to be a very pious and righteous person, whose word might be as well taken as any man's, yet, for entire satisfaction, he thus spake to him; *God is with thee in all that thou doest: now therefore swear unto me here by God, that thou wilt not deal falsely with me.* Gen. xxi.  
22, 23.

Abraham, though he did much confide in the honesty of his servant Eliezer, having intrusted him with all his estate, yet in the affair concerning the marriage of his son, he could not but thus oblige him: *Put, saith he, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh; and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou wilt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites.* Gen. xxiv.  
2, 3.

Laban had good experience of Jacob's fidelity; yet that would not satisfy, but, *The Lord, said he, watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another. If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness between thee and me. The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us.* Gen. xxxi.  
49, 50, 53.



SERM.  
XVII.Gen. l. 5,  
25.1 Sam. xx.  
14, 15, 17.2 Sam. xxi.  
7.1 Kings i.  
51.  
Ezra x. 5.  
Neh. v. 12;  
xiii. 25.

So did Jacob make Joseph swear, that he would bury him in Canaan: and Joseph caused the children of Israel to swear, that they would translate his bones. So did Jonathan cause his beloved friend David to swear, that he would shew kindness to him, and to his house for ever. The prudence of which course the event sheweth, the total excision of Jonathan's family being thereby prevented; for, *The king*, it is said, *spared Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, because of the Lord's oath that was between them.*

These instances declare, that there is no security which men can yield comparable to that of an oath; the obligation whereof no man wilfully can infringe, without renouncing the fear of God, and any pretence to his favour.

Wherefore, human society will be extremely wronged and damnified by the dissolving or slackening these most sacred bands of conscience: and consequently by their common and careless use; which soon will breed a contempt of them, and render them insignificant, either to bind the swearers, or to ground a trust on their oaths.

As by the rare and reverent use of oaths their dignity is upheld, and their obligation kept fast: so by the frequent and negligent application of them, by the prostituting them to every mean and toyish purpose, their respect will be quite lost, their strength will be loosed, they will prove unserviceable to public use.

If oaths generally become cheap and vile, what will that of allegiance signify? If men are wont to play with swearing any where, can we expect they should be serious and strict therein at the bar,

or in the church? Will they regard God's testimony, or dread his judgment, in one place, or at one time, when every where upon any, upon no occasion, they dare to confront and condemn them? Who then will be the more trusted for swearing? What satisfaction will any man have from it? The ripeness of this practice, as it is the sign, so it will be the cause of a general diffidence among men.

Incredible therefore is the mischief, which this vain practice will bring in, to the public; depriving princes of their best security, exposing the estates of private men to uncertainty, shaking all the confidence men can have in the faith of one another.

For which detriments, accruing from this abuse to the public, every vain swearer is responsible, and he would do well to consider, that he will never be able to make reparation for them. And the public is much concerned that this enormity be retrenched.

IV. Let us consider, that rash and vain swearing is very apt often to bring the practiser of it into that most horrible sin of perjury. For, *False swearing*, as the Hebrew wise man saith, *naturally springeth out of much swearing*<sup>m</sup>: and, *He*, saith St Chrysostom, *that sweareth continually, both willingly and unwillingly, both ignorantly and knowingly, both in earnest and in sport, being often transported by anger and many other things, will frequently forswear. It is confessed and manifest,*

<sup>m</sup> Φύεται ἐκ πολυορκίας ψευδορκία.—Philo in Decal. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 196.]

Ne quisquam facili juratione etiam ad perjurium decidisset, et in ecclesia populo prædicabat, et suos instituerat, ne quis juraret, nec ad modicum quidem.—Possid. in Vit. S. Aug. cap. xxv. [Inter Opp. Aug. Tom. x. (App.) col. 274 f.]

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*that it is necessary for him that sweareth much, to be perjurious<sup>a</sup>. For, saith he again, it is impossible, it is impossible for a mouth addicted to swearing, not frequently to forswear<sup>o</sup>. He, that sweareth at random, as blind passion moveth, or wanton fancy prompteth, or the tempter suggesteth, often will hit upon asserting that which is false, or promising that which is impossible: that want of conscience and of consideration, which do suffer him to violate God's law in swearing, will betray him to the venting of lies, which backed with oaths become perjuries. If sometime, what he sweareth doth happen to be true and performable, it doth not free him of guilt; it being his fortune, rather than his care or conscience, which keepeth him from perjury.*

V. Such swearing commonly will induce a man to bind himself by oath to unlawful practices; and consequently will entangle him in a woful necessity, either of breaking his oath, or of doing worse, and committing wickedness: so that, *Swearing, as St Chrysostom saith, hath this misery attending it, that both transgressed and observed it plagueth those who are guilty of it<sup>p</sup>.*

Of this perplexity the holy scripture affordeth two notable instances: the one of Saul, forced

1 Sam. xiv.  
45.  
(1 Sam.  
xxv. 22.  
David.)

<sup>a</sup> Ἄνδρ. ιδ'. [Opp. Tom. vi. p. 553.] [Πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ὁ διηλεκῶς ὁμνύς, καὶ ἐκὼν καὶ ἄκων, καὶ ἀγνοῶν καὶ εἰδὼς, καὶ σπουδάζων καὶ παίζων, καὶ ὑπὸ θυμοῦ πολλάκις ἐκφερόμενος, καὶ ὑφ' ἐτέρων πολλῶν, ἐπιорκήσει πάντως. . . . οὕτως ἐστὶν ὁμολογημένον καὶ δῆλον, ὅτι τὸν πολύορκον ἀνάγκη καὶ ἐπίορκον εἶναι.]

<sup>o</sup> Ἀμήχανον γὰρ, ἀμήχανον, στόμα μεμελετηκὸς ὁμνύναι, μὴ συνεχῶς ἐπιорκεῖν.—[Ibid. p. 559.]

<sup>p</sup> Τοῦτο τὸ δεινὸν ἔχει ὁ ὅρκος, ὅτι καὶ παραβαινόμενος καὶ φυλαττόμενος κολάζει τοὺς ἀλίσκομένους.—[Ubi supra, p. 553.]

to break his rash oaths; the other of Herod, being engaged thereby to commit a most horrid murder.

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Matt. xiv.  
9.

Had Saul observed his oaths<sup>a</sup>, what injury had he done, what mischief had he produced, in slaughtering his most worthy and most innocent son, the prop and glory of his family, the bulwark of his country, and the grand instrument of salvation to it; in forcing the people to violate their cross oath, and, for prevention of one, causing many perjuries! He was therefore fain to desist, and lie under the guilt of breaking his oaths.

And for Herod, the excellent Father thus presseth the consideration of his case: *Take, saith he, I beseech you, the chopped-off head of St John, and his warm blood yet trickling down; each of you bear it home with you, and conceive that before your eyes you hear it uttering speech, and saying, Hate the murderer of me, an oath. That which reproof did not, this an oath did do; that which the tyrant's wrath could not, this the necessity of keeping an oath did effect. For when the tyrant was reprehended publicly in the audience of all men, he bravely did bear the rebuke; but when he had cast himself into the necessity of oaths, then did he cut off that blessed head<sup>r</sup>.*

<sup>a</sup> Vid. Chrys. [Ubi supra, p. 558.]

<sup>r</sup> [Ubi supra, p. 552]. [Καὶ γὰρ παρεκάλεσα πρῶην ὑμᾶς τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἰωάννου λαβόντας ἀποτετμημένην, καὶ θερμοῦ τοῦ αἵματος ἔτι ἀποστάζουσιν, οὕτως ἀπελθεῖν οἴκαδε ἕκαστον, καὶ νομίζειν πρὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ὁρᾶν αὐτὴν φωνὴν ἀφιεῖσαν καὶ λέγουσαν· μισήσατέ μου τὸν σφαγέα, τὸν ὄρκον. ὅπερ ἔλεγχος οὐκ ἐποίησε, τοῦτο ὄρκος ἐποίησεν· ὅπερ θυμὸς τυραννικὸς οὐκ ἴσχυσε, τοῦτο εὐορκίας ἀνάγκη παρεσκεύασε. καὶ ὅτε μὲν ἠλέγχετο δημοσίᾳ πάντων ἀκουόντων, ἤνεγκε γενναίως τὴν ἐπιτίμησιν ὁ τύραννος· ὅτε δὲ εἰς ὄρκων ἀνάγκην ἑαυτὸν ἐνέβαλε, τότε τὴν μακαρίαν ἐκείνην ἀπέτεμε κεφαλὴν.]

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VI. Likewise the use of rash swearing will often engage a man in undertakings very inconvenient and detrimental to himself. A man is bound to perform his vows to the Lord, whatever they be, whatever damage or trouble thence may accrue to him, if they be not unlawful. It is the law, *That which is gone out of thy lips, thou shalt keep and perform.* It is the property of a good man, that, *He sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not.* Wherefore it is the part of a sober man, to be well advised, what he doth swear or vow religiously: that he do not put himself into the inextricable strait of committing great sin, or undergoing great inconvenience; that he do not rush into that snare of which the Wise Man speaketh, *It is a snare to a man to devour that which is holy,* (or to swallow a sacred obligation,) *and after vows to make inquiry,* seeking how he may disengage himself: the doing which is a folly offensive to God, as the Preacher telleth us; *When, saith he, thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.* God will not admit our folly in vowing, as a plea or an excuse for non-performance; he will exact it from us, both as a due debt, and as a proper punishment of our impious folly.

For instance, into what loss and mischief, what sorrow, what regret and repentance, did the unadvised vow of Jephtha throw him! the performance whereof, as St Chrysostom<sup>t</sup> remarketh, God did permit, and order to be commemorated with solemn

<sup>s</sup> Ὡς περ τινὶ παγίδι κατεχόμενοι, καὶ δεσμοῖς ἀλύτοις συνδεδεμένοι, &c.—Id. Ἄνδρ. η'. [p. 518.]

<sup>t</sup> Ἄνδρ. ιδ'. [Ubi supra, p. 555.]

lamentation, that all posterity might be admonished thereby, and deterred from such precipitant swearing. SERM.  
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VII. Let us consider, that swearing is a sin of all others peculiarly clamorous, and provocative of divine judgment. God is hardly so much concerned, or in a manner constrained, to punish any other sin as this. He is bound in honour and interest to vindicate his name from the abuse, his authority from the contempt, his holy ordinance from the profanation, which it doth infer. He is concerned to take care, that his providence be not questioned, that the dread of his majesty be not voided, that all Religion be not overthrown by the outrageous commission thereof with impunity.

It immediately toucheth his name ; it expressly calleth upon him to mind it, to judge it, to shew himself in avenging it. He may seem deaf or unconcerned, if, being so called and provoked, he doth not declare himself.

There is understood to be a kind of formal compact between him and mankind, obliging him to interpose, to take the matter into his cognizance, being specially addressed to him.

The bold swearer doth importune him to hear, doth rouse him to mark, doth brave him to judge and punish his wickedness.

Hence no wonder, that the flying roll, a quick and inevitable curse, doth surprise the swearer, and cut him off, as it is in the Prophet. No wonder, that so many remarkable instances do occur in history, of signal vengeance inflicted on persons notably guilty of this crime<sup>u</sup>. No wonder, that

<sup>u</sup> Chrys. *Ἀνθρ. θ.* p. 525 ; *α'* p. 565 ; *α'* p. 591.

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a common practice thereof doth fetch down public judgments; and that, as the prophets of old did proclaim, *Because of swearing the land*

Jer. xxiii.

10.

Hos. iv. 2, *mourneth.*

3.

VIII. Further, (passing over the special laws against it, the mischievous consequences of it, the sore punishments appointed to it,) we may consider, that to common sense vain swearing is a very unreasonable and ill-favoured practice, greatly misbecoming any sober, worthy, or honest person; but especially most absurd and incongruous to a Christian.

For, in ordinary conversation, what needful or reasonable occasion can intervene of violating this command? If there come under discourse a matter of reason, which is evidently true and certain, then what need can there be of an oath to affirm it, it sufficing to expose it to light, or to propose the evidences for it? If an obscure or doubtful point come to be debated, it will not bear an oath; it will be a strange madness to dare, a great folly to hope the persuading it thereby. What were more ridiculous, than to swear the truth of a demonstrable theorem? What more vain than so to assert a disputable problem? Oaths, like wagers, are in such cases no arguments, except of silliness in the users of them.

If a matter of history be started, then if a man be taken for honest, his word will pass for attestation without further assurance: but if his veracity or probity be doubted, his oath will not be relied on, especially when he doth obtrude it. For it was no less truly than acutely said by the old poet, Οὐκ ἄνδρος ὅρκοι πίστις, ἀλλ' ὅρκων ἀνὴρ, *The man doth*

not get credit from an oath, but an oath from the man<sup>x</sup>: and a greater author, *An oath*, saith St Chrysostom, *doth not make a man credible; but the testimony of his life, and the exactness of his conversation, and a good repute. Many often have burst with swearing, and persuaded no man: others only nodding have deserved more belief, than those who have swore so mightily*<sup>y</sup>. Wherefore oaths, as they are frivolous coming from a person of little worth or conscience, so they are superfluous in the mouth of an honest and worthy person; yea, as they do not increase the credit of the former, so they may impair that of the latter.

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*A good man, as Socrates did say, should apparently so demean himself, that his word may be deemed more credible than an oath*<sup>z</sup>; the constant tenor of his practice vouching for it, and giving it such weight, that no asseveration can further corroborate it.

He should *Toîs ἔργοις εὐορκεῖν*, *Swear by his good deeds*, and exhibit *Βίον ἀξιώπιστον*, *A life deserving belief*, as Clemens Alexandrinus<sup>a</sup> saith: so that no man should desire more from him, than his bare assertion; but willingly should yield him the privilege, which the Athenians granted to

<sup>x</sup> Æschyl. [Frag. Incert. Stob. Florileg. xxvii. 2.]

<sup>y</sup> Ὅτι γὰρ οὐκ ὄρκος ἀξιώπιστον ποιεῖ, ἀλλὰ βίου μαρτυρία καὶ πολιτείας ἀκρίβεια καὶ ὑπόληψις ἀγαθή. πολλοὶ πολλάκις διεβράγησαν ὁμνύντες, καὶ οὐδένα ἔπεισαν· ἕτεροι δὲ, ἐπινεύσαντες μόνον, ἀξιοπιστότεροι τῶν τοσαῦτα ὁμωμοκότων ἐφάνησαν.—Ἄνδρ. ζ'. [p. 514.]

<sup>z</sup> Δεῖ τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας τρόπον ὄρκου πιστότερον φαίνεσθαι παρεχομένους.—Socr. apud Max. [Serm. xxxiii. De Jurejurando.]

Ὁ τοῦ σπουδαίου λόγος, ὄρκος ἔστω βέβαιος, ἀκλινὴς, ἀψευδέστατος.—Philo Jud. [de Spec. Leg. Opp. Tom. ii. p. 270.]

Colendo fidem jurant (Scythæ.—Apud Curt. vii. 8.)

<sup>a</sup> Strom. vii. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 863.]



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He should be like the Essenes, of whom Josephus saith, that every thing spoken by them was more valid than an oath; whence they declined swearing<sup>c</sup>.

He should so much confide in his own veracity and fidelity, and so much stand upon them, that he should not deign to offer any pledge for them, implying them to want confirmation.

He should, as St Hierome saith, so love truth, that he should suppose himself to have sworn whatsoever he hath said<sup>d</sup>; and therefore should not be apt to heap another oath on his words.

Upon such accounts, common reason directed even pagan wise men wholly to interdict swearing in ordinary conversation, or about petty matters, as an irrational and immoral practice, unworthy of sober and discreet persons. *Forbear swearing about any matter*, said Plato, cited by Clemens Alexandrinus<sup>e</sup>. *Avoid swearing, if you can, wholly*, said Epictetus<sup>f</sup>. *For money swear by no god, though you swear truly*, said Isocrates<sup>g</sup>. And divers the like precepts occur in other Heathens;

<sup>b</sup> Ἦν δὲ καὶ ἀξιόπιστος σφόδρα, ὥστε μὴ ἐξὸν ἀνώμοτον μαρτυρεῖν, τούτῳ μόνῳ συνεχώρουν Ἀθηναῖοι.—Diog. Laert. in Xenocr. [iv. 2, 4.]

<sup>c</sup> Πᾶν μὲν τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἰσχυρότερον ὄρκου· τὸ δὲ ὁμνύειν αὐτοῖς περιίσταται.—Joseph. [de B. Jud. Lib. ii. cap. 8. Opp. Tom. ii. p. 162.]

<sup>d</sup> Tantus in te sit veri amor, ut quicquid dixeris, juratum putes.—Hier. [Paulinus ad Celant. Ep. cix. Opp. Tom. iv. p. ii. col. 817.]

<sup>e</sup> Ὁρκος περὶ παντὸς ἀπέστω.—Strom. v. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 707.]

<sup>f</sup> Ὁρκον παραίτησαι, εἰ μὲν οἶόν τε, εἰς ἅπαν.—Epict. Ench. [cap. xxxiii. § 5.]

<sup>g</sup> Ἐνεκα χρημάτων μηδένα Θεῶν ὁμόσης, μηδ' ἂν εὐορκεῖν μέλλης.—Isocr. ad Demon.

the mention whereof may well serve to strike shame into many loose and vain people, bearing the name of Christians. SERM.  
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Indeed, for a true and real Christian, this practice doth especially in a far higher degree misbecome him, upon considerations peculiar to his high calling and holy profession.

Plutarch telleth us, that among the Romans the Flamen of Jupiter was not permitted to swear: of which law, among other reasons, he assigneth this; *Because it is not handsome, that he, to whom divine and greatest things are intrusted, should be distrusted about small matters*<sup>b</sup>. The which reason may well be applied to excuse every Christian from it, who is a priest to the Most High God, and hath the most celestial and important matters concredited to him; in comparison to which, all other matters are very mean and inconsiderable. The dignity of his rank should render his word *Verbum honoris* passable without any further engagement. He hath opinions of things, he hath undertaken practices inconsistent with swearing. For, he that firmly doth believe that God is ever present with him, an auditor and witness of all his discourse; he that is persuaded that a severe judgment shall pass on him, wherein he must give an account for every idle word which slippeth from him, and wherein, among other offenders, assuredly liars will be condemned to the burning lake; he that in a great sacrament (once most solemnly taken, and frequently renewed) hath engaged and sworn, toge-

Matt. xii.

36.

Rev. xxi.

8; xxii. 15.

<sup>b</sup> Διατὶ τῇ ἱερεῖ τοῦ Διὸς οὐκ ἔξεστιν ὁμόσαι;—ἢ ὅτι περὶ μικρῶν ἀπιστεῖσθαι τὸν τὰ θεῖα καὶ μέγιστα πεπιστευμένον οὐκ εἰκός ἐστιν;—Plut. in Capit. Rom. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 421. Ed. Steph.]

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Col. iii. 9.  
Eph. iv. 25.  
1 Pet. ii. 1.

Ps. cxix.  
106.

ther with all other divine commandments, to observe those which most expressly do charge him to be exactly just, faithful, and veracious in all his words and deeds; who therefore should be ready to say with David, *I have sworn, and am steadfastly purposed to keep thy righteous judgments*; to him every word hath the force of an oath<sup>1</sup>; every lie, every breach of promise, every violation of faith doth involve perjury: for him to swear, is false heraldry, an impertinent accumulation of one oath upon another: he of all men should disdain to allow, that his words are not perfectly credible, that his promise is not secure, without being assured by an oath.

IX. Indeed the practice of swearing greatly disparageth him that useth it, and derogateth from his credit upon divers accounts.

It signifieth, (if it signifieth any thing,) that he doth not confide in his own reputation, and judgeth his own bare word not to deserve credit: for why, if he taketh his word to be good, doth he back it with asseverations? why, if he deemeth his own honesty to bear proof, doth he cite Heaven to warrant it?

*It is, saith St Basil, a very foul and silly thing for a man to accuse himself as unworthy of belief, and to proffer an oath for security<sup>k</sup>.*

By so doing, a man doth authorize others to distrust him: for it can be no wrong to distrust

<sup>1</sup> Evangelica autem veritas non recepit juramentum, quum omnis sermo fidelis pro jurejurando sit.—Hier. in Matt. v. 34. [Opp. Tom. iv. p. 1. col. 18.]

<sup>k</sup> Αἰσχρὸν γὰρ παντελῶς καὶ ἀνόητον, ἑαυτοῦ κατηγορεῖν ὡς ἀναξίου πίστεως, καὶ τὴν ἐκ τῶν ὀρκῶν ἀσφάλειαν ἐπιφέρεισθαι.—Bas. in Psal. xiv. [Opp. Tom. I. p. 356 D.]

him, who doth not pretend to be a credible person, or that his saying alone may safely be taken; who, by suspecting that others are not satisfied with his simple assertion, implieth a reason known to himself for it. SERM.  
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It rendereth whatever he saith to be in reason suspicious<sup>1</sup>, as discovering him void of conscience and discretion: for he that flatly against the rules of duty and reason will swear vainly, what can engage him to speak truly? He, that is so loose in so clear and so considerable a point of obedience to God, how can he be supposed stanch in regard to any other? *It being, as Aristotle hath it, the part of the same men to do ill things, and not to regard forswearing*<sup>m</sup>. It will at least constrain any man to suspect all his discourse of vanity and unadvisedness, seeing he plainly hath no care to bridle his tongue from so gross an offence.

It is strange, therefore, that any man of honour or honesty should not scorn, by such a practice, to shake his own credit, or to detract from the validity of his word; which should stand firm on itself, and not want any attestation to support it. It is a privilege of honourable persons, that they are excused from swearing, and that their *Verbum honoris* passeth in lieu of an oath: is it not then strange, that when others dispense with them, they should not dispense with themselves; but voluntarily degrade themselves, and with sin forfeit so noble a privilege?

<sup>1</sup> ἤδη γὰρ ὁ γε ὁμνὸς εἰς ἀπιστίαν ὑπονοεῖται.—Philo Jud. [in Decal. Opp. Tom. II. p. 195.]

<sup>m</sup> Τῶν αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἀνθρώπων τὰ πονηρὰ πράττειν, καὶ μὴ φροντίζειν ἐπιορκούοντας.—Arist. Rhet. ad Alex. cap. xviii. [2.]

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X. To excuse these faults, the swearer will be forced to confess, that his oaths are no more than waste and insignificant words; deprecating being taken for serious, or to be understood that he meaneth any thing by them; but only, that he useth them as expletive phrases, *Πρὸς ἀναπλήρωσιν λόγου*<sup>a</sup>, to plump his speech, and fill up sentences. But such pleas do no more than suggest other faults of swearing, and good arguments against it; its impertinence, its abuse of speech, its disgracing the practiser of it, in point of judgment and capacity. For so it is, oaths, as they commonly pass, are mere excrescences of speech, which do nothing but encumber and deform it; they so embellish discourse, as a wen or a scab do beautify a face, as a patch or a spot do adorn a garment.

To what purpose, I pray, is God's name hooked and haled into our idle talk? why should we so often mention him, when we do not mean any thing about him? would it not, into every sentence to foist a dog or a horse, (to intrude Turkish, or any barbarous gibberish,) be altogether as proper and pertinent?

What do these superfluities signify, but that the venter of them doth little skill the use of speech, or the rule of conversation, but meaneth to sputter and prate any thing, without judgment or wit; that his invention is very barren, his fancy beggarly, craving the aid of any stuff to relieve it? One would think a man of sense should grutch to lend his ear, or incline his attention to such motley, ragged discourse; that without nauseating he scarce should endure to observe men lavishing

<sup>a</sup> Hierocles. [in Aur. Carm. Com. p. 38.]

time, and squandering their breath so frivolously. It is an affront to good company to pester it with such talk. SERM.  
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XI. But further, upon higher accounts, this is a very uncivil and unmannerly practice.

Some vain persons take it for a genteel and graceful thing, a special accomplishment, a mark of fine breeding, a point of high gallantry: for who, forsooth, is the brave spark, the complete gentleman, the man of conversation and address, but he that hath the skill and confidence (O heavens! how mean a skill! how mad a confidence!) to lard every sentence with an oath or a curse; making bold at every turn to salute his Maker, or to summon him in attestation of his tattle; not to say, calling and challenging the Almighty to damn and destroy him? Such a conceit, I say, too many have of swearing, because a custom thereof, together with divers other fond and base qualities, hath prevailed among some people, bearing the name and garb of gentlemen.

But in truth, there is no practice more crossing the genuine nature of genteelness, or misbecoming persons well born and well bred; who should excel the rude vulgar in goodness, in courtesy, in nobleness of heart, in unwillingness to offend, and readiness to oblige those with whom they converse; in steady composedness of mind and manners, in disdaining to say or do any unworthy, any unhand-some things.

For this practice is not only a gross rudeness toward the main body of men, who justly reverence the name of God, and detest such an abuse thereof; not only, further, an insolent defiance of the com-

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mon profession, the Religion, the law of our country, which disalloweth and condemneth it; but it is very odious and offensive to any particular society or company, at least wherein there is any sober person, any, who retaineth a sense of goodness, or is anywise concerned for God's honour: for to any such person no language can be more disgustful; nothing can more grate his ears, or fret his heart, than to hear the sovereign object of his love and esteem so mocked and slighted; to see the law of his Prince so disloyally infringed, so contemptuously trampled on; to find his best Friend and Benefactor so outrageously abused. To give him the lie were a compliment, to spit in his face were an obligation, in comparison to this usage.

Wherefore it is a wonder, that any person of rank, any, that hath in him a spark of ingenuity, or doth at all pretend to good manners, should find in his heart or deign to comply with so scurvy a fashion; a fashion, much more befitting the scum of the people, than the flower of the gentry; yea rather, much below any man endued with a scrap of reason, or a grain of goodness. Would we bethink ourselves, modest, sober, and pertinent discourse would appear far more generous and masculine, than such mad hectoring the Almighty, such boisterous insulting over the received laws and general notions of mankind, such ruffianly swaggering against sobriety and goodness. If gentlemen would regard the virtues of their ancestors, the founders of their quality; that gallant courage, that solid wisdom, that noble courtesy, which advanced their families, and severed them from the vulgar; this degenerate wantonness and sordidness

of language would return to the dunghill, or rather, which God grant, be quite banished from the world; the vulgar following their example. SERM.  
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XII. Further, the words of our Lord, when he forbad this practice, do suggest another consideration against it, deducible from the causes and sources of it; from whence it cometh, that men are so inclined or addicted thereto; *Let, saith he, your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.* The roots of it he assureth us are evil, and therefore the fruit cannot be good: it is no grape which groweth from thorns, or fig from thistles. Consult experience, and observe whence it doth proceed. Matt.v.37.

Sometimes, it ariseth from exorbitant heats of spirit, or transports of unbridled passion. When a man is keenly peevish, or fiercely angry, or eagerly contentious, then he blustereth, and dischargeth his choler in most tragical strains; then he would fright the objects of his displeasure, by the most violent expressions thereof. This is sometime alleged in excuse of rash swearing; *I was provoked*, the swearer will say, *I was in passion*: but it is strange, that a bad cause should justify a bad effect; that one crime should warrant another; that what would spoil a good action should excuse a bad one.

Sometimes, it proceedeth from arrogant conceit, and a tyrannical humour; when a man fondly admireth his own opinion, and affecting to impose it on others, is thence moved to thwack it on with lusty asseverations.

Sometimes, it issueth from wantonness and levity of mind, disposing a man to sport with any



SERM. XVII. thing, how serious, how grave, how sacred and venerable soever.

Sometimes, its rise is from stupid inadvertency, or heady precipitancy; when the man doth not heed what he saith, or consider the nature and consequence of his words, but snatcheth any expression which cometh next, or which his roving fancy doth offer; for want of that caution of the Psalmist, *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.*

Ps. xxxix. 1; cxli. 3.

Sometimes, (alas! how often in this miserable age!) it doth spring from profane boldness; when men design to put affronts on Religion, and to display their scorn and spite against conscience; affecting the reputation of stout blades, of gallant hectors, of resolute giants, who dare do any thing, who are not afraid to defy Heaven, and brave God Almighty himself.

Ps. xxvi. 4.

Sometimes, it is derived from apish imitation, or a humour to comply with a fashion current among vain and dissolute persons.

It always doth come from a great defect of conscience, of reverence to God, of love to goodness, of discretion and sober regard to the welfare of a man's soul.

Matt. vii. 16.

From such evidently vicious and unworthy sources it proceedeth, and therefore must needs be very culpable. No good, no wise man can like actions drawn from such principles. Further,

XIII. This offence may be particularly aggravated by considering, that it hath no strong temptation alluring to it; that it yieldeth no sensible advantage; that it most easily may be avoided or corrected.

*Every sin, saith St Chrysostom, hath not the same punishment; but those things which may easily be reformed do bring on us greater punishment<sup>o</sup>: and what can be more easy than to reform this fault? Tell me, saith he, what difficulty, what sweat, what art, what hazard, what more doth it require, beside a little care, to abstain wholly from it<sup>p</sup>? It is but willing, or resolving on it, and it is instantly done: for there is not any natural inclination disposing to it, any strong appetite to detain us under its power.*

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It gratifieth no sense, it yieldeth no profit, it procureth no honour; for the sound of it is not very melodious, and no man surely did ever get an estate by it, or was preferred to dignity for it. It rather to any good ear maketh a horrid and jarring noise; it rather, with the best part of the world, produceth displeasure, damage, and disgrace. What therefore beside monstrous vanity, and unaccountable perverseness, should hold men so devoted thereto?

Surely of all dealers in sin, the swearer is palpably the silliest, and maketh the worst bargains for himself; for he sinneth gratis, and, like those in the Prophet, selleth his soul for nothing. An epicure Isai. lii. 3. hath some reason to allege, an extortioner is a man of wisdom, and acteth prudently in comparison to him; for they enjoy some pleasure, or acquire some

<sup>o</sup> Οὐ γὰρ δὴ πᾶν ἁμάρτημα τὴν αὐτὴν φέρει κόλασιν, ἀλλὰ τὰ εὐκατόρθωτα μείζονα ἡμῖν ἐπάγει τὴν τιμωρίαν.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ι'. [Opp. Tom. vi. p. 531.]

<sup>p</sup> Εἶπε μοι ποίαν δυσκολίαν; ποίαν ἰδρώτα; ποίαν τέχνην; ποῖον κίνδυνον; ὀλίγης χρεία σπουδῆς μόνον, καὶ ταχέως τὸ πᾶν ἡμῖν ἀνυσθήσεται.—Id. Ἀνδρ. ιθ'. p. 594. Cf. Ἀνδρ. δ'. p. 489; Ἀνδρ. ε'. p. 499.

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gain here, in lieu of their salvation hereafter: but this fondling offendeth Heaven, and abandoneth happiness, he knoweth not why or for what. He hath not so much as the common plea of human infirmity to excuse him; he can hardly say, that he was tempted thereto by any bait<sup>a</sup>.

A fantastic humour possesseth him of spurning at piety and soberness; he inconsiderately followeth a herd of wild fops; he affecteth to play the ape. What more than this can he say for himself?

XIV. Finally, let us consider, that as we ourselves, with all our members and powers, were chiefly designed and framed to glorify our Maker; (the which to do is indeed the greatest perfection and noblest privilege of our nature;) so our tongue and speaking faculty were given to us to declare our admiration and reverence of him, to exhibit our due love and gratitude toward him, to profess our trust and confidence in him, to celebrate his praises, to avow his benefits, to address our supplications to him, to maintain all kinds of devotional intercourse with him, to propagate our knowledge, fear, love, and obedience to him: in all such ways to promote his honour and service. This is the most proper, worthy, and due use of our tongue, for which it was created, to which it is dedicated, from whence it becometh, as it is so often styled, *our Glory, and the best member that we have*; that, whereby we excel all creatures here below, and whereby we are no less discriminated from them

Ps. xvi. 9;  
xxx. 12;  
lvii. 8;  
cviii. 1.

<sup>a</sup> Οὗτος δὲ, οὐδεμιᾶς αὐτὸν ἀνάγκης βιαζομένης, ὑπ' ἀνοίας μόνῃς εἰς τὸ βάραθρον καταπίπτει τῆς ἁμαρτίας.—Id. Ἀνδρ. ι'. p. 531.

Οὐδὲ γὰρ οὗτοί τινα πρόφασιν ἔχουσι προβαλίσθαι, ἀλλὰ καταφρόνησιν μόνον.—Ibid.

than by our reason<sup>r</sup>; that, whereby we consort with the blessed Angels above in the distinct utterance of praise, and communication of glory to our Creator. Wherefore applying this to any impious discourse, with this to profane God's blessed name, with this to violate his holy commands, with this to unhallow his sacred ordinance, with this to offer dishonour and indignity to him, is a most unnatural abuse, an horrid ingratitude toward him.

It is that indeed, whereby we render this noble organ incapable of any good use. For how (as the excellent Father<sup>r</sup> doth often urge) can we pray to God for mercies, or praise God for his benefits, or heartily confess our sins, or cheerfully partake of the holy mysteries, with a mouth defiled by impious oaths, with a heart guilty of so heinous disobedience?

Likewise, whereas a secondary, very worthy use of our speech is, to promote the good of our neighbour, and especially to edify him in piety, according to that wholesome precept of the apostle, *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers;* the practice of swearing is an abuse very contrary to that good purpose, serving to corrupt our neighbour, and to instil into him a contempt of Religion; or, however, grievously to scandalize him.

XV. I shall add but two words more. One is, that we would seriously consider, that our

<sup>r</sup> Hoc enim uno præstamus vel maxime feris, quod colloquimur inter nos, et quod exprimere dicendo sensa possumus.—Cic. de Orat. i. [8, 32.]

<sup>s</sup> Vide Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ιδ'. Opp. Tom. vi. p. 559. Ἀνδρ. ια'. p. 538.

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15.

Matt. v. 34.

blessed Saviour, who loved us so dearly, who did and suffered so much for us, who redeemed us by his blood, who said unto us, *If ye love me, keep my commandments*, he thus positively hath enjoined, *But I say unto you, Swear not at all:* and how then can we find in our heart directly to thwart his word?

The other is, that we would lay to heart the reason, whereby St James doth enforce the point, and the sting in the close of our text, wherewith I conclude; *But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay nay, lest ye fall into condemnation, or, lest ye fall under damnation*<sup>t</sup>. From the which infinite mischief, and from all sin that may cause it, God in mercy deliver us through our blessed Redeemer Jesus, to whom for ever be all glory and praise.

<sup>t</sup> Ὅτι μὴ ὑπὸ κρίτῃ πέσῃτε, quidam legunt.—Vid. Grot.

## SERMON XVIII.

### OF EVIL-SPEAKING IN GENERAL.

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TITUS III. 2.

—*To speak evil of no man.*

THESE words do imply a double duty; one SERM.  
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incumbent on teachers, another on the people  
who are to be instructed by them.

The teacher's duty appeareth from reflecting on the words of the context, which govern these, and make them up an entire sentence; Ὑπομίμνησκε αὐτοὺς, *Put them in mind*, or, rub up their memory to do thus. It is St Paul's injunction to Titus, a bishop and pastor of the church, that he should admonish the people committed to his care and instruction, as of other great duties, (of yielding obedience to magistrates, of behaving themselves peaceably, of practising meekness and equity toward all men, of being readily disposed to every good work,) so particularly of this, Μηδένα βλασφημεῖν, *To revile, or speak evil of no man.*

Whence it is apparent, that this is one of the principal duties that preachers are obliged to mind people of, and to press upon them. And if this were needful then, when charity, kindled by such instructions and examples, was so lively; when Christians, by their sufferings, were so inured to meekness and patience; when every one, for the

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honour of his Religion, and the safety of his person, was concerned in all respects to demean himself innocently and inoffensively; then is it now especially requisite, when (such engagements and restraints being taken off, love being cooled, persecution being extinct, the tongue being set loose from all extraordinary curbs) the transgression of this duty is grown so prevalent and rife, that evil-speaking is almost as common as speaking, ordinary conversation extremely abounding therewith, that ministers should discharge their office in dehorting and dissuading from it.

Well indeed it were, if by their example of using mild and moderate discourse, of abstaining from virulent invectives, tauntings, and scoffings, good for little but to inflame anger and infuse ill-will, they would lead men to good practice of this sort: for no examples can be so wholesome, or so mischievous to this purpose, as those which come down from the pulpit, the place of edification, backed with special authority and advantage.

However, it is to preachers a ground of assurance, and matter of satisfaction, that in pressing this duty they shall perform their duty: their text being not so much of their own choosing, as given them by St Paul; they can surely scarce find a better to discourse upon: it cannot be a matter of small moment or use, which this great master and guide so expressly directeth us to insist upon. And to the observance of his precept, so far as concerneth me, I shall immediately apply myself.

It is then the duty of all Christian people, (to be taught, and pressed on them,) not to reproach, or speak evil of any man. The which duty, for

your instruction, I shall first endeavour somewhat to explain, declaring its import and extent; then, for your further edification, I shall inculcate it, proposing several inducements persuasive to the observance of it. SERM.  
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I. For explication, we may first consider the object of it, *No man*; then the act itself, which is prohibited, *To blaspheme*, that is, to reproach, to revile, or, as we have it rendered, *To speak evil*.

*No man.* St Paul questionless did especially mean hereby to hinder the Christians at that time from reproaching the Jews and the Pagans among whom they lived, men in their lives very wicked and corrupt, men in opinion extremely dissenting from them, men who greatly did hate, and cruelly did persecute them; of whom therefore they had mighty provocations and temptations to speak ill; their judgment of the persons, and their resentment of injuries, making it difficult to abstain from doing so. Whence, by a manifest analogy may be inferred, that the object of the duty is very large, indeed universal and unlimited: that we must forbear reproach not only against pious and virtuous persons, against persons of our own judgment or party, against those who never did harm or offend us, against our relations, our friends, our benefactors; in respect of whom there is no ground or temptation of ill-speaking; but even against the most unworthy and wicked persons, against those who most discomfited in opinion and practice from us, against those who never did oblige us, yea those who have most disobliged us, even against our most bitter and spiteful enemies. There is no exception or excuse to be admitted from the



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quality, state, relation, or demeanour of men; the duty (according to the proper sense, or due qualifications and limits of the act) doth extend to all men: for, *Speak evil of no man*.

As for the act, it may be inquired what the word, *Βλασφημεῖν*, *To blaspheme*, doth import. I answer, that it is to vent words concerning any person, which do signify in us ill opinion, or contempt, anger, hatred, enmity conceived in our minds toward him; which are apt in him to kindle wrath, and breed ill blood toward us; which tend to beget in others that hear ill conceit, or ill-will toward him; which are much destructive of his reputation, prejudicial to his interests, productive of damage or mischief to him. It is otherwise in

John ix.  
28.

Luke xi.

45.

2 Pet. ii.

11.

Jude 9.

James iv.

11.

Rom. xii.

14.

Luke vi.

28.

2 Sam. xvi.

10.

scripture termed *Λοιδορεῖν*, *To rail*, or *revile*, (to use bitter and ignominious language;) *ὕβριζειν*, *To speak contumeliously*; *Φέρειν βλάβασφημον κρίσιν*, *To bring railing accusation*, (or reproachful censure;) *Καταλαλεῖν*, *To use obloquy*, or *obtrection*; *Καταρᾶσθαι*, *To curse*, that is, to speak words importing that we do wish ill to a person.

Such is the language we are prohibited to use. To which purpose we may observe, that, whereas in our conversation and commerce with men, there do frequently occur occasions to speak of men, and to men, words apparently disadvantageous to them, expressing our dissent in opinion from them, or a dislike in us of their proceedings, we may do this in different ways and terms; some of them gentle and moderate, signifying no ill mind or disaffection toward them; others harsh and sharp, arguing height of disdain, disgust, or despite, whereby we bid them defiance, and shew that we mean to

exasperate them. Thus, telling a man that we differ in judgment from him, or conceive him not to be in the right, and calling him a liar, a deceiver, a fool; saying that he doeth amiss, taketh a wrong course, transgresseth the rule, and calling him dishonest, unjust, wicked; (to omit more odious and provoking names, unbecoming this place, and not deserving our notice;) are several ways of expressing the same things: whereof the latter, in relating passages concerning our neighbour, or in debating cases with him, is prohibited; for thus the words reproaching, reviling, railing, cursing, and the like, do signify; and thus our Lord himself doth explain them, in his divine sermon, wherein he doth enact this law; *Whosoever, saith he, shall say to his brother, Raca, (that is, vain man, or liar,) shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire;* that is, he rendereth himself liable to a strict account, and to severe condemnation before God, who useth contemptuous and contumelious expressions toward his neighbour, in proportion to the malignity of such expressions.

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Acts xxiii.  
3, 4, 5.

Matt. v.  
22.

The reason of things also doth help to explain those words, and to shew why they are prohibited: because those harsh terms are needless; mild words serving as well to express the same things: because they are commonly unjust, loading men with greater defect or blame than they can be proved to deserve, or their actions do import: (for every man that speaketh falsehood is not therefore a liar, every man that erreth is not thence a fool, every man that doeth amiss is not consequently dishonest or wicked; the secret intentions and the habitual

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dispositions of men not being always to be collected from their outward actions:) because they are uncharitable, signifying that we entertain the worst opinions of men, and make the worst construction of their doings, and are disposed to shew them no favour or kindness: because also they produce mischievous effects, such as spring from the worst passions raised by them.

This in gross is the meaning of the precept. But, since there are some other precepts seeming to clash with this; since there are cases, wherein we are allowed to use the harsher sort of terms, great examples in appearance thwarting this rule; therefore it may be requisite, for determining the limits of our duty, and distinguishing it from transgression, that such exceptions or restrictions should be somewhat declared.

I First then, we may observe, that it may be allowable to persons anywise concerned in the prosecution or administration of justice, to speak words, which in private intercourse would be reproachful. A witness may impeach of crimes hurtful to justice, or public tranquillity; a judge may challenge, may rebuke, may condemn an offender in proper terms, (or forms of speech prescribed by law,) although most disgraceful and distasteful to the guilty: for it belongeth to the majesty of public justice to be bold, blunt, severe; little regarding the concerns or passions of particular persons, in comparison to the public welfare.

A testimony therefore, or sentence against a criminal, which materially is a reproach, and morally would be such in a private mouth, is not yet formally so, according to the intent of this rule.

For practices of this kind, which serve the exigencies of justice, are not to be interpreted as proceeding from anger, hatred, revenge, any bad passion, or humour; but in way of needful discipline for God's service, and common benefit of men. It is not indeed so much the minister of justice, as God himself, our absolute Lord, as the Sovereign, God's representative, acting in the public behalf, as the Commonwealth itself, who by his mouth do rebuke the obnoxious person.

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2 God's ministers in religious affairs, to whom the care of men's instruction and edification is committed, are enabled to inveigh against sin and vice, whoever consequentially may be touched thereby; yea sometimes it is their duty, with severity and sharpness to reprove particular persons, not only privately, but publicly, in order to their correction, and edification of others<sup>a</sup>.

Thus St Paul directeth Timothy; *Them that sin* (notoriously and scandalously he meaneth) *rebuke before all, that others may fear:* that is, in a manner apt to make impression on the minds of the hearers, so as to scare them from like offences. And to Titus he writes, *Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.* And, *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins,* saith the Lord to the Prophet. Such are the charges and commissions laid on and granted to his messengers.

1 Tim. v.

20.  
2 Tim. iv.

2.

Tit. i. 13.

Isai. lviii. 1.

Thus may we observe, that God's Prophets of old, St John the Baptist, our Lord himself, the holy Apostles, did in terms most vehement and

<sup>a</sup> Vide Hier. in Pelag. Lib. 1. [Opp. Tom. II. p. ii. col. 500.]

- SERM. XVIII. biting reprove the age in which they lived, and some particular persons in them. The Prophets are full of declamations and invectives against the general corruption of their times, and against the particular manners of some persons in them. *Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters! They are all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men; and they bend their tongues like their bow for lies.*
- Isai. i. 4. *Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth*
- Jer. ix. 2, 3. *the cause of the widow come before them. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their means. As troops of robbers wait for a man, so*
- Isai. i. 23. *the company of priests murder in the way by consent, and commit lewdness. Such is their style commonly. St John the Baptist calleth the Scribes*
- Hos. ix. 15. *and Pharisees A generation of vipers. Our Saviour*
- Ezek. xxii. 6, 27. *speaketh of them in the same terms; calleth them*
- Jer. v. 31; xiv. 14. *An evil and adulterous generation, Serpents, and*
- Hos. vi. 9. *Children of vipers; Hypocrites, Painted sepulchres,*
- Ezek. xxii. 26. *Obscure graves, (Μνημεῖα ἄδελα,) Blind guides,*
- Mic. iii. 11. *Fools and blind, Children of the devil. St Paul*
- Zeph. iii. 4. *likewise calleth the schismatical and heretical*
- Matt. iii. 7. *teachers, Dogs, False apostles, Evil and deceitful*
- Matt. xvi. 4; xii. 34, 39; xxiii. 13, &c.; xv. 7, 14; xvi. 3; xxii. 18. *workers, Men of corrupt minds, Reprobates, and*
- Luke xii. 1; xi. 44. *Abominable. With the like colours do St Peter,*
- Matt. xxiii. 24, 27. *St Jude, and other the Apostles, paint them.*
- John viii. 44. *Which sort of speeches are to be supposed to pro-*
- Phil. iii. 2. *ceed, not from private passion or design, but out*
- 2 Cor. xi. 13. *of holy zeal for God's honour, and from earnest*
- 1 Tim. vi. 5. *charity toward men, for to work their amendment*
- 2 Tim. iii. 8. *and common edification. They were uttered also*
- Tit. i. 16.

by special wisdom and peculiar order; from God's authority and in his name: so that, as God by them is said to preach, to entreat, to warn, and to exhort; so by them also, he may be said to reprehend and reproach.

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3 Even private persons in due season, with discretion and temper, may reprove others, whom they observe to commit sin, or follow bad courses, out of charitable design, and with hope to reclaim them. This was an office of charity imposed anciently even upon the Jews; much more doth it lie upon Christians, who are obliged more earnestly to tender the spiritual good of those, who, by the stricter and more holy bands of brotherhood, are allied to them. *Thou shalt not hate thy brother; thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him,* was a precept of the old Law: and, *Νοθετεῖν τοὺς ἀτάκτους, To admonish the disorderly,* is an Evangelical rule. Such persons we are enjoined to shun and decline: but first, we must endeavour by sober advice and admonition to reclaim them; we must not thus reject them, till they appear contumacious and incorrigible, refusing to hear us, or becoming deaf to reproof. This, although it necessarily doth include setting out their faults, and charging blame on them, (answerable to their offences,) is not the culpable reproach here meant, it being needful toward a wholesome effect, and proceeding from charitable intention.

Lev. xix.  
17.

1 Thess. v.

14.  
1 Tim. vi.

5.  
Rom. xvi.

17.  
Tit. iii. 10.

2 Thess. iii.  
6.

Matt.  
xviii. 17.

4 Some vehemency (some smartness and sharpness) of speech may sometimes be used in defence of truth, and impugning errors of bad consequence; especially when it concerneth the interests of truth, that the reputation and authority of its adversaries

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Jude 3.

should somewhat be abased or abated. If, by a partial opinion or reverence toward them, however begotten in the minds of men, they strive to overbear or discountenance a good cause, their faults, so far as truth permitteth and need requireth, may be detected and displayed. For this cause particularly may we presume our Lord (otherwise so meek in his temper, and mild in his carriage toward all men) did characterize the Jewish Scribes in such terms, that their authority (being then so prevalent with the people) might not prejudice the truth, and hinder the efficacy of his doctrine. This is part of that *Ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι τῇ πίστει*, that duty of *Contending earnestly for the faith*, which is incumbent on us.

Matt. xvii.  
17.

Acts viii.  
23.

Acts xiii.  
8, 10.

5 It may be excusable, upon particular emergent occasions, with some heat of language, to express dislike of notorious wickedness. As our Lord doth against the perverse incredulity and stupidity in the Pharisees, their profane misconstruction of his words and actions, their malicious opposing truth, and obstructing his endeavours in God's service. As St Peter did to Simon Magus, telling him, *That he was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity*. As St Paul to Elymas the sorcerer, when *He withstood him, and desired to turn away the deputy, Sergius, from the faith*; O, said he, stirred with a holy zeal and indignation, *thou full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?* The same Spirit, which enabled him to inflict a sore punishment on that wicked wretch, did prompt him to use that sharp language toward him; unques-

tionably deserved, and seasonably pronounced. As SERM. XVIII.  
 also, when the High Priest commanded him illegally and unjustly to be misused, that speech, from a mind justly sensible of such outrage, broke forth, *God shall smite thee, thou whited wall.* So, when Acts xxiii. 3.  
 St Peter presumptuously would have dissuaded our Lord from compliance with God's will, in undergoing those crosses which were appointed to him by God's decree, our Lord calleth him Satan: *Ὑπαγε, Σατανᾶ, Avaunt, Satan, thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that are of men.* Matt. xvi. 23.

These sorts of speeches, issuing from just and honest indignation, are sometimes excusable, oftentimes commendable; especially, when they come from persons eminent in authority, of notable integrity, endued with special measures of divine grace, of wisdom, of goodness; such as cannot be suspected of intemperate anger, of ill-nature, of ill-will, of ill-design.

In such cases as are above mentioned, a sort of evil-speaking about our neighbour may be allowable or excusable. But, for fear of overdoing, great caution and temper are to be used; and we should never apply any such limitations, as cloaks, to palliate unjust or uncharitable dealing. Generally, it is more advisable to suppress such eruptions of passion, than to vent it; for seldom passion hath not inordinate motions joined with it, or tendeth to good ends. And however, it will do well to reflect on those cases, and to remark some particulars about them.

First, we may observe, that, in all these cases, all possible moderation, equity, and candour are to be



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Deut. xxv.  
2, 3.

Josh. vii.  
19, 25.

used; so that no ill-speaking be practised beyond what is needful or convenient. Even in prosecution of offences, the bounds of truth, of equity, of humanity and clemency are not to be transgressed. A judge must not lay on the most criminal person more blame, or contumely, than the case will bear, or than serveth the designs of justice. However our neighbour doth incur the calamities of sin and of punishment, we must not be insolent or contemptuous toward him. So we may learn by that law of Moses, backed with a notable reason: *And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed; lest if he should exceed, and beat him above those stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.* Whence appears, that we should be careful of not vilifying an offender beyond measure. And how mildly governors should proceed in the administration of justice, the example of Joshua may teach us, who thus examineth Achan, the cause of so great mischief to the public; *My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done, hide it not from me. My son; what compellation could be more benign and kind? I pray thee; what language could be more courteous and gentle? Give glory to God, and make confession; what words could be more inoffensively pertinent?* And when he sentenced that great malefactor, the cause of so much mischief, this was all he said, *Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord will trouble thee;* words void of contumely

or insulting, containing only a close intimation of the cause, and a simple declaration of the event he was to undergo. SERM.  
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Secondly, Likewise ministers, in the taxing sin and sinners, are to proceed with great discretion and caution, with much gentleness and meekness; signifying a tender pity of their infirmities, charitable desires of their good, the best opinion of them, and the best hopes for them, that may consist with any reason; according to those apostolical rules: *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted:* and, *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves:* and more expressly, *A servant of the Lord must not fight, but be gentle toward all, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.* Thus did St Peter temper his reproof of Simon Magus with this wholesome and comfortable advice: *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.* Gal. vi. 1.  
Rom. xv. 1.  
2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.  
Acts viii. 22.

Thirdly, As for fraternal correption and reproof of faults, when it is just and expedient to use it, ordinarily the calmest and mildest way is the most proper, and most likely to obtain good success: it commonly doth, in a more kindly manner, convey the sense thereof into the heart, and therein more powerfully worketh remorse, than the fierce and harsh way. Clearly to shew a man his fault, with the reason proving it such, so that he becometh thoroughly convinced of it, is sufficient to breed in him regret, and to shame him before his own mind: Prov. xvii. 10.

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to do more, (in way of aggravation, of insulting on him, of inveighing against him,) as it doth often not well consist with humanity, so it is seldom consonant to discretion, if we do, as we ought, seek his health and amendment<sup>a</sup>. Humanity requireth, that when we undertake to reform our neighbour, we should take care not to deform him; (not to discourage or displease him more than is necessary;) when we would correct his manners, that we should also consider his modesty, and consult his reputation; *Curam agentes*, as Seneca speaketh, *non tantum salutis, sed et honestæ cicatricis*<sup>b</sup>; *Having care not only to heal the wound, but to leave a comely scar behind*. Be, adviseth St Austin, so displeased with iniquity, as to consider and consult humanity<sup>c</sup>: for, *Zeal void of humanity is not*, saith St Chrysostom, *zeal, but rather animosity; and reproof not mixed with good-will, appeareth a kind of malignity*<sup>d</sup>. We should so rebuke those who, by frailty or folly incident to mankind, have fallen into misdemeanours, that they may perceive, we do sincerely pity their ill case, and tender their good; that we mean not to upbraid their weakness, or insult upon their misfortune; that we delight not to inflict on them

<sup>a</sup> Reprehensio contumelia vacare debet.

Neque monitio aspera sit, neque objurgatio contumeliosa.—Ambros. de Offic. iii. 22. [Opp. Tom. ii. col. 140 c.]

‘Ο δ’ ὁδηγός, όταν λάβῃ τινὰ πλανώμενον, ἤγαγεν ἐπὶ τὴν ὁδὸν τὴν δέουσαν· οὐχὶ καταγελάσας ἢ λοιδορησάμενος ἀπῆλθε. καὶ σὺ δείξον αὐτῷ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ ὅψει ὅτι ἀκολουθεῖ. &c.—Epict. Diss. ii. 12.

<sup>b</sup> Sen. de Clem. i. [17. 2.] Vide Chrys. in Matt. Hom. xxix. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 202.]

<sup>c</sup> Ita succense iniquitati, ut consulere memineris humanitatis.—Aug.

<sup>d</sup> [Ζῆλος γὰρ συγγνώμης ἀπεστερημένος οὐ ζῆλος, ἀλλὰ θυμὸς μῦλλον ἐστίν, καὶ νουθεσία φιланθρωπίαν οὐκ ἔχουσα, βασκανία τις εἶναι δοκεῖ.—Orat. ix. Opp. Tom. v. p. 32.]

more grief, than is plainly needful and unavoidable; that we are conscious and sensible of our own obnoxiousness to the like slips or falls, and do consider, that we also may be tempted, and being tempted may be overborne. This they cannot perceive, or be persuaded of, except we temper our speech with benignity and mildness. Such speech prudence also dictateth, as most useful and hopeful for producing the good ends honest reprehension doth aim at; it mollifieth and melteth a stubborn heart, it subdueth and winneth a perverse will, it healeth distempered affections. Whereas, roughly handling is apt to defeat or obstruct the cure; rubbing the sore doth tend to exasperate and inflame it. Harsh speech rendereth advice odious and unsavoury; driveth from it, and depriveth it of efficacy: it turneth regret for a fault into displeasure and disdain against the reprover: it looks not like the dealing of a kind friend<sup>e</sup>, but like the persecution of a spiteful enemy: it seemeth rather an ebullition of gall, or a defluxion from rancour, than an expression of good will: the offender will take it for a needless and pitiless tormenting, or for a proud and tyrannical domineering over him. He, that can bear a friendly touch, will not endure to be lashed with angry and reproachful words. In fine, all reproof ought to be seasoned with discretion, with candour, with moderation and meekness.

Fourthly, Likewise in defence of truth, and maintenance of a good cause, we may observe, that commonly the fairest language is most proper and advantageous, and that reproachful or foul terms are

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Prov. xvi.  
24.

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1.

<sup>e</sup> Καὶ μὴ ὡς ἐχθρὸν ἡγείσθε, ἀλλὰ νοουθετεῖτε ὡς ἀδελφόν.—2 Thees. iii. 15.

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most improper and prejudicial. A calm and meek way of discoursing doth much advantage a good cause, as arguing the patron thereof to have confidence in the cause itself, and to rely upon his strength: that he is in a temper fit to apprehend it himself, and to maintain it; that he propoundeth it as a friend, wishing the hearer for his own good to follow it, leaving him the liberty to judge and choose for himself. But rude speech, and contemptuous reflections on persons, as they do signify nothing to the question, so they commonly bring much disadvantage and damage to the cause, creating mighty prejudices against it: they argue much impotency in the advocate, and consequently little strength in what he maintains<sup>f</sup>; that he is little able to judge well, and altogether unapt to teach others: they intimate a diffidence in himself concerning his cause, and that, despairing to maintain it by reason, he seeks to uphold it by passion; that, not being able to convince by fair means, he would bear down by noise and clamour; that, not skilling to get his suit quietly, he would extort it by force, obtruding his conceits violently as an enemy, or imposing them arbitrarily as a tyrant. Thus doth he really disparage and slur his cause, however good and defensible in itself<sup>g</sup>.

A modest and friendly style doth suit truth; it,

<sup>f</sup> Qui, dum dicit, malus videtur, utique male dicit.—Quint. VI. 2. [18.]

Nisi quod imperitos etiam animosos atque iracundos esse manifestum est, dum per inopiam consilii et sermonis ad iracundiam facile vertuntur.—Firmil. apud Cyp. Ep. LXXV. [Opp. p. 150.]

<sup>g</sup> Et inhumanum est—et cum ipsi, qui dicit, inutile—tum causæ contrarium, quia plane adversarii fiunt et inimici, et quantumcunque eis virium est, contumelia augetur.—Quint. XII. 9. [11.]

like its author, doth usually reside (not in the rumbling wind, nor in the shaking earthquake, nor in the raging fire, but) in the small still voice: sounding in this, it is most audible, most penetrant, and most effectual: thus propounded, it is willingly hearkened to: for men have no aversion from hearing those who seem to love them, and wish them well. It is easily conceived, no prejudice or passion clouding the apprehensive faculties: it is readily embraced, no animosity withstanding or obstructing it. It is, *The sweetness of the lips, which, as the Wise Man telleth us, increaseth learning;* disposing a man to hear lessons of good doctrine, rendering him capable to understand them, insinuating and impressing them upon the mind: the affections being thereby unlocked, the passage becomes open to the reason<sup>h</sup>.

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xix. 11, 12.Prov. xvi.  
21.

But it is plainly a very preposterous method of instructing, of deciding controversies, of begetting peace, to vex and anger those concerned by ill language<sup>i</sup>. Nothing surely doth more hinder the efficacy of discourse, and prevent conviction, than doth this course, upon many obvious accounts. It doth first put in a strong bar to attention: for no

<sup>h</sup> Δεῖ γὰρ τὸν μέλλοντά τι τῶν χρησίμων μαθεῖν, πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων πάντων ἡδέως ἔχειν πρὸς τὸν διδάσκοντα. . . . ἡδέως δὲ οὐκ ἂν τις σχοίη πρὸς τὸν θρασυνόμενον καὶ ὑβρίζοντα.—Chrys. in 2 Tim. Or. vi. [Opp. Tom. iv. p. 355.]

<sup>i</sup> Ὅν ἴσως ἐκέρδανας ἂν τῇ χρηστότητι, τοῦτον ἀπολλύεις τῇ θρασύτητι.—Greg. Naz. [Or. xxxii. Opp. Tom. i. p. 600 c.]

Οὐ γὰρ ἀπαιδύτως παιδεύομεν, οὐδὲ ταῖς ὑβρεσι βάλλομεν, ὅπερ πάσχουσιν οἱ πολλοί, μὴ τῷ λόγῳ μαχόμενοι, τοῖς δὲ λέγουσι, καὶ τὴν ἀσθένειάν ἐστιν ὅτε τῶν λογισμῶν ταῖς ὑβρεσι συγκαλύπτουντες.—Id. [Or. xlii. Tom. i. p. 757 A.]

Ὅταν πρὸς τινα ἀηδῶς ἔχομεν, καὶ ὑγιές τι λέγῃ, οὐ προθύμως οὐδὲ μεθ' ἡδονῆς δεχόμεθα τὰ λεγόμενα.—Chrys. Or. lxi. [Opp. Tom. v. p. 404.]

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man willingly doth afford an ear to him, whom he conceiveth disaffected toward him; which opinion harsh words infallibly will produce: no man can expect to hear truth from him, whom he apprehendeth disordered in his own mind, whom he seeth rude in his proceedings, whom he taketh to be unjust in his dealing; as men certainly will take those to be, who presume to revile others for using their own judgment freely, and dissenting from them in opinion. Again, this course doth blind the hearer's mind, so that he cannot discern what he that pretends to instruct him doth mean, or how he doth assert his doctrine. Truth will not be discerned through the smoke of wrathful expressions; right being defaced by foul language will not appear; passion being excited will not suffer a man to perceive the sense, or the force of an argument. The will also thereby is hardened and hindered from submitting to truth. In such a case, *Non persuadebis, etiamsi persuaseris*<sup>k</sup>: although you stop his mouth, you cannot subdue his heart; although he can no longer fight, yet he never will yield: animosity, raised by such usage, rendereth him invincibly obstinate in his conceits and courses. Briefly, from this proceeding men become unwilling to mark, unfit to apprehend, indisposed to embrace any good instruction or advice: it maketh them indocile and intractable, averse from better instruction, pertinacious in their opinions, and refractory in their ways.

Prov. xxiv.  
26.

*Every man, saith the Wise Man, shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer: but no man surely*

<sup>k</sup> [Erasmi Adagia p. 141. Elzev. Amstel. 1663.]

will be ready to kiss those lips, which are embittered with reproach, or defiled with dirty language.

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It is said of Pericles, that with thundering and lightning he put Greece into confusion<sup>1</sup>: such discourse may serve to confound things, it seldom tendeth to compose them. If reason will not pierce, rage will scarce avail to drive it in<sup>m</sup>. Satirical virulency may vex men sorely, but it hardly ever soundly converts them. Few become wiser or better by ill words. Children may be frightened into compliance by loud and severe increpations; but men are to be allured by rational persuasion backed with courteous usage: they may be sweetly drawn, they cannot be violently driven to change their judgment and practice. Whence that advice of the apostle, *With meekness instruct those that oppose themselves*, doth no less savour of wisdom than of<sup>25</sup> goodness.

Fifthly, As for the examples of extraordinary persons, which, in some cases, do seem to authorize the practice of evil-speaking, we may consider, that, as they had especial commission enabling them to do some things beyond ordinary standing rules, wherein they are not to be imitated; as they had especial illumination and direction, which preserved them from swerving, in particular cases, from truth and equity; so the tenor of their life did evidence, that it was the glory of God, the good of men, the

<sup>1</sup> [Ἐντεῦθεν ὀργῇ Περικλέης οὐλύμπιος  
ἠστράπτεν, ἐβρόντα, ξυνεκύκα τὴν Ἑλλάδα.

Aristoph. Acharn. 530.]

<sup>m</sup> Ὁ γὰρ σφοδρὸς ἔλεγχος, ὅταν μετ' ἐπιεικείας γίνηται, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μάλιστα δακεῖν δυνάμενος. ἔνεστι γὰρ, ἔνεστι μετὰ πραότητος καθάψασθαι μᾶλλον, ἢ μετὰ θρασύτητος ἐντρέψαι.—Chrys. in 2 Tim. ii. 24. [Opp. Tom. iv. p. 355.]



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necessity of the case, which moved them to it<sup>n</sup>.  
And of them also, we may observe, that, in divers occasions, yea generally, whenever only their private credit or interest were concerned, although grievously provoked, they did out of meekness, patience, and charity, wholly forbear reproachful speech. Our Saviour, who sometimes, upon special reason, in his discourses used such harsh words, yet, when he was most spitefully accused, reproached, and persecuted, did not open his mouth, or return one angry word: *Being reviled, he did not, as St Peter, proposing his example to us, telleth us, revile again; suffering, he did not threaten.* He used the softest language to Judas, to the soldiers, to Pilate and Herod, to the priests. And the Apostles, who sometimes inveigh so zealously against the opposers and perverters of truth, did, in their private conversation and demeanour, strictly observe their own rules of abstinence from reproach: *Being reviled we bless, being persecuted we suffer it;* so doth St Paul represent their practice. And in reason, we should rather follow them in this their ordinary course, than in their extraordinary sallies of practice.

I Cor. iv.  
12.  
Rom. xii.  
14.

In fine, however in some cases and circumstances, the matter may admit such exceptions, so that all language disgraceful to our neighbour is not ever culpable; yet the cases are so few and rare in comparison, the practice commonly so dangerous

<sup>n</sup> This case is like the other cases, wherein the practice of good and great men, although excusable, is not yet exemplary: as the heroical acts of David, of Samson, of Ehud, of Phinehas, of Elias, of Moses; David's duel, Samson's suicide, Moses's slaying the Egyptian, Ehud's stabbing the king of Moab, Elias's calling for fire, by extraordinary and peculiar instinct.

and ticklish, that worthily forbearing to reproach doth bear the style of a general rule: and particularly, for clearer direction, we are in the following cases obliged carefully to shun it; or in speaking about our neighbour, we must observe these cautions. SERM.  
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1 We should never in severe terms inveigh against any man without reasonable warrant, or presuming upon a good call and commission thereto. As every man should not assume to himself the power of administering justice, (of trying, sentencing, and punishing offenders,) so must not every man take upon him to speak against those who seem to do ill; which is a sort of punishment, including the infliction of smart and damage upon the persons concerned. Every man hath indeed a commission, in due place and season, with discretion and moderation to admonish his neighbour offending; but otherwise to speak ill of him, no private man hath just right or authority: and therefore in presuming to do it he is disorderly and irregular, trespassing beyond his bounds, usurping an undue power to himself.

2 We should never speak ill of any man without apparent just cause. It must be just: we must not reproach men for things innocent or indifferent; for not concurring in disputable opinions with us, for not complying with our humour, for not serving our interest, for not doing any thing to which they are not obliged, or for using their liberty in any case: it must be at least some considerable fault, which we can so much as tax. It must also be clear and certain, notorious and palpable; for to speak ill upon slender conjectures, or doubtful suspicions, is full of iniquity. *Ὅσα οὐκ* Jude 10.

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*οἶδασι, βλασφημοῦσι, They rail at things which they know not,* is part of those wicked men's character, whom St. Jude doth so severely reprehend. If indeed, these conditions being wanting, we presume to reproach any man, we do therein no less than slander him; which to do is unlawful in any case, is in truth a most diabolical and detestable crime. To impose odious names and characters on any person, which he deserveth not, or without ground of truth, is to play the Devil; and hell itself scarce will own a fouler practice.

3 We should not cast reproach upon any man without some necessary reason. In charity (that *Prov. x. 12. Charity which covereth all sins, which covereth a multitude of sins*) we are bound to connive at the defects, and to conceal the faults of our brethren; *1 Pet. iv. 8. 1 Cor. xiii. 4.* to extenuate and excuse them, when apparent, so far as we may in truth and equity. We must not therefore ever produce them to light, or prosecute them with severity, except very needful occasion urgeth: such as is the glory and service of God, the maintenance of truth, the vindication of innocence, the preservation of public justice and peace, the amendment of our neighbour himself, or securing others from contagion. Barring such reasons, (really being, not affectedly pretended,) we are bound not so much as to disclose, as to touch our neighbour's faults; much more, not to blaze them about, not to exaggerate them by vehement invectives.

4 We should never speak ill of any man beyond measure: be the cause never so just, the occasion never so necessary, we should yet nowise be immoderate therein, exceeding the bounds pre-

scribed by truth, equity, and humanity. We should never speak worse of any man whatever, than he certainly deserveth, according to the most favourable construction of his doings; never more than the cause absolutely requireth. We should rather be careful to fall short of what, in rigorous truth, might be said against him, than in the least to pass beyond it. The best cause had better seem to suffer a little by our reservedness in its defence, than any man be wronged by our aspersing him; for God, the patron of truth and right, is ever able to secure them, without the succour of our unjust and uncharitable dealing. The contrary practice hath indeed within it a spice of slander, that is, of the worst iniquity.

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5 We must never speak ill of any man out of bad principles, or for bad ends.

No sudden or rash anger should instigate us thereto. For, *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice,* is the apostolical precept: they are all associates and kindred, which are to be cast away together. Such anger itself is culpable, as a work of the flesh, and therefore to be suppressed; and all its brood therefore is also to be smothered: the daughter of such a mother cannot be legitimate. *The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*

Eph. iv. 31.  
Col. iii. 8.

James i.  
20.

We must not speak ill out of inveterate hatred or ill-will. For this murderous, this viperous disposition should itself be rooted out of our hearts: whatever issueth from it cannot be otherwise than very bad; it must be a poisonous breath that exhalet from that foul source.

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We must not be provoked thereto by any revengeful disposition, or rancorous spleen, in regard to any injuries or discourtesies received. For, as we must not revenge ourselves, or render evil in any other way; so particularly not in this, which is commonly the special instance expressly prohibited. *Render not evil for evil*, saith St Peter, *nor railing for railing; but contrariwise bless*, or *speak well*: and, *Bless them*, saith our Lord, *which curse you*; *Bless*, saith St Paul, *and curse not*.

1 Pet. iii.  
9.

Matt. v.

44.  
Rom. xii.

14.

Deut. xxv.

3.  
Prov. xi.

12.

We must not also do it out of contempt: for we are not to slight our brethren in our hearts. No man really (considering what he is, whence he came, how he is related, what he is capable of) can be despicable. Extreme naughtiness is indeed contemptible; but the unhappy person, that is engaged therein, is rather to be pitied than despised. However, charity bindeth us to stifle contemptuous motions of heart, and not to vent them in vilifying expression. Particularly, it is a barbarous practice out of contempt to reproach persons for natural imperfections, for meanness of condition, for unlucky disasters, for any involuntary defects: this being indeed to reproach mankind, unto which such things are incident; to reproach Providence, from the disposal whereof they do proceed. *Whoso mocketh the poor despiseth his Maker*, saith the Wise Man: and the same may be said of him, that reproachfully mocketh him that is dull in parts, deformed in body, weak in health or strength, or defective in any such way.

Prov. xvii.

5.

Likewise we must not speak ill out of envy; because others do excel us in any good quality, or exceed us in fortune. To harbour this base and

ugly disposition in our minds is unworthy of a man, who should delight in all good springing up anywhere, and befalling any man, naturally allied unto him; it is most unworthy of a Christian, who should tender his brother's good as his own, and *Rejoice with those that rejoice.* From thence to be drawn to cast reproach upon any man is horrible and heinous wickedness. SERM.  
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Rom. xii.  
15.

Neither should we ever use reproach as a means of compassing any design we do affect or aim at: it is an unwarrantable engine of raising us to wealth, dignity, or repute. To grow by the diminution, to rise by the depression, to shine by the eclipse of others, to build a fortune upon the ruins of our neighbour's reputation, is that which no honourable mind can affect, no honest man will endeavour. Our own wit, courage, and industry, managed with God's assistance and blessing, are sufficient, and only lawful instruments of prosecuting honest enterprises; we need not, we must not, instead of them, employ our neighbour's disgrace: no worldly good is worth purchasing at such a rate, no project worth achieving by such foul ways.

Neither should we out of malignity, to cherish or gratify ill humour, use this practice. It is observable of some persons, that not out of any formed displeasure, grudge, or particular disaffection, nor out of any particular design, but merely out of a *Kakóntheia*, an ill disposition, springing up from nature, or contracted by use, they are apt to carp at any action, and with sharp reproach to bite any man that comes in their way, thereby feeding and soothing that evil inclination. But, as this inhuman and currish humour should be corrected

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and extirpated from our hearts, so should the issues thereof at our mouths be stopped: the bespattering our neighbour's good name should never afford any satisfaction or delight unto us.

Nor out of wantonness should we speak ill, for our divertisement or sport. For our neighbour's reputation is too great and precious a thing to be played with, or offered up to sport; we are very foolish in so disvaluing it, very naughty in so misusing it. Our wits are very barren, our brains are ill furnished with store of knowledge, if we can find no other matter of conversation.

Nor out of negligence and inadvertency should we sputter our reproachful speech; shooting ill words at rovers, or not regarding who stands in our way. Among all temerities this is one of the most noxious, and therefore very culpable.

In fine, we should never speak concerning our neighbour from any other principle than charity, or to any other intent but what is charitable; such as tendeth to his good, or at least is consistent therewith. *Let all your things, saith St Paul, be done in charity:* and words are most of the things we do concerning our neighbour, wherein we may express charity. In all our speeches therefore touching him, we should plainly shew, that we have a care of his reputation, that we tender his interest, that we even desire his content and repose. Even when reason and need do so require, that we should disclose and reprehend his faults, we may, we should, by the manner and scope of our speech, signify thus much. Which rule were it observed, if we should never speak ill otherwise than out of charity, surely most ill-speaking would be cut off;

1 Cor. xvi.  
14.

most, I fear, of our tattling about others, much of our gossiping would be marred. SERM.  
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Indeed, so far from bitter or sour our language should be, that it ought to be sweet and pleasant; so far from rough and harsh, that it should be courteous and obliging; so far from signifying wrath, ill-will, contempt, or animosity, that it should express tender affection, good esteem, sincere respect toward our brethren; and be apt to produce the like in them toward us: the sense of them should be grateful to the heart; the very sound and accent of them should be delightful to the ear. *Every one should please his neighbour for his good to edification.* Our words should *always be ἐν χάριτι, with grace, seasoned with salt*; they should have the grace of courtesy, they should be seasoned with the salt of discretion, so as to be sweet and savoury to the hearers°. Commonly ill language is a certain sign of inward enmity and ill-will. Good-will is wont to shew itself in good terms; it clotheth even its grief handsomely, and its displeasure carrieth favour in its face; its rigour is civil and gentle, tempered with pity for the faults and errors which it disliketh, with the desire of their amendment and recovery whom it reprehendeth. It would inflict no more evil than is necessary; it would cure its neighbour's disease, without exasperating his patience, troubling his modesty, or impairing his credit. As it always judgeth candidly, so it never condemneth extremely.

° Caritas—cum te arguit mitis est; cum blanditur simplex est. Pie solet sævire, sine dolo mulcere; patienter novit irasci, humiliter indignari.—S. Bern. Ep. II. [Opp. Tom. I. col. 8 c.]



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II. But so much for the explication of this precept, and the directive part of our discourse. I shall now briefly propound some inducements to the observance thereof.

1 Let us consider, that nothing more than railing and reviling is opposite to the nature, and inconsistent with the tenor of our Religion<sup>p</sup>; the which, as even a Heathen did observe of it, *Nihil nisi justum suadet et lene, Doth recommend nothing but what is very just and mild*<sup>q</sup>: which propoundeth the practices of charity, meekness, patience, peaceableness, moderation, equity, alacrity or good humour, as its principal laws, and declareth them the chief fruits of the divine Spirit and grace: which chargeth us to curb and compose all our passions; more particularly to restrain and repress anger, animosity, envy, malice, and such like dispositions, as the fruits of carnality and corrupt lust: which consequently drieth up all the sources, or  
1 Pet. iv. 8. dammeth up the sluices of bad language. As it doth above all things oblige us to bear no ill-will in our hearts, so it chargeth us to vent none with our mouths.

2 It is therefore often expressly condemned and prohibited as evil. It is the property of the wicked, a character of those who work iniquity,  
Ps. lxiv. 3. *To whet their tongues like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.*

<sup>p</sup> *Lingua Christum confessa non sit maledica, non sit turbulenta, non conviciis et litibus perstrepsens audjatur.*—Cypr. de Unit. Eccl. [Opp. p. 202.]

*A conviciis et maledictis quæso vos abstinete; quia neque maledici regnum Dei consequentur, et lingua quæ Christum confessa est, incolumis et pura cum suo honore servanda est.*—Id. [Ep. vi. Opp. p. 12.]

<sup>q</sup> Ammian. Marcell. [xxii. 11, 5.]

3 No practice hath more severe punishments denounced to it than this. The railer (and it is indeed a very proper and fit punishment for him, he being exceedingly bad company) is to be banished out of all good society; thereto St Paul adjudgeth him: *I have, saith he, now written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.* Ye see what company the railer hath in the text, and with what a crew of people he is coupled: but no good company he is allowed elsewhere; every good Christian should avoid him as a blot, and a pest of conversation: and finally, he is sure to be excluded from the blessed society above in heaven<sup>r</sup>; for, *Neither thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God: and, Without (without the heavenly city) are dogs,* saith St John in his Revelation, that is, those chiefly, who, out of currish spite or malignity, do frowardly bark at their neighbours, or cruelly bite them with reproachful language.

1 Cor. v.  
11.

1 Cor. vi.  
10.

Rev. xxii.  
15.

4 If we look upon such language in its own nature, what is it but a symptom of a foul, a weak, a disordered and distempered mind? It is the smoke of inward rage and malice: it is a stream that cannot issue from a sweet spring: it is a storm that cannot bluster out of a calm region. *The words of the pure are pleasant words,* as the Wise Man saith.

Prov. xv.  
26.

<sup>r</sup> Hinc ergo intelligere possumus quam gravis sit et perniciosa maledictio, quando, etiamsi alia bona adfuerint, sola excludit a cœlo.—Salv. de Guber. Dei. Lib. iii. [p. 54. Ed. Baluz.]

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5 This practice doth plainly signify low spirit, ill breeding, and bad manners: and thence misbecometh any wise, any honest, any honourable person. It agreeth to children, who are unapt and unaccustomed to deal in matters considerable, to squabble; to women of meanest rank, (apt by nature, or custom, to be transported with passion,) to scold. In our modern languages it is termed *villany*, as being proper for rustic boors, or men of coarsest education and employment; who, having their minds debased by being conversant in meanest affairs, do vent their sorry passions, and bicker about their petty concernments, in such strains; who also, being not capable of a fair reputation, or sensible of disgrace to themselves, do little value the credit of others, or care for aspersing it. But such language is unworthy of those persons, and cannot easily be drawn from them, who are wont to exercise their thoughts about nobler matters, who are versed in affairs manageable only by calm deliberation and fair persuasion, not by impetuous and provocative rudeness; the which do never work otherwise upon masculine souls, than so as to procure disdain and resistance. Such persons, knowing the benefit of a good name, being wont to possess a good repute, prizing their own credit as a considerable good, will never be prone to bereave others of the like by opprobrious speech. A noble enemy will never speak of his enemy in bad terms\*.

We may further consider, that all wise, all honest, all ingenuous persons have an aversion from ill

\* In quo admirari soleo gravitatem et justitiam et sapientiam Cæsaris. Nunquam, nisi honorificentissime, Pompeium appellat. —Cic. Epist. ad Fam. vi. 6.

speaking, and cannot entertain it with any acceptance or complacence; that only ill-natured, unworthy, and naughty people are its willing auditors, or do abet it with applause. The good man, in the fifteenth Psalm, *Non accipit opprobrium, doth not take up, or accept, a reproach against his neighbour:* but *A wicked doer, saith the Wise Man, giveth heed to false lips, and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.* And what reasonable man will do that, which is disgustful to the wise and good, is grateful only to the foolish and baser sort of men? I pretermitt, that using this sort of language doth incapacitate a man for to benefit his neighbour<sup>t</sup>, and defeateth his endeavours for his edification, disparaging a good cause, prejudicing the defence of truth, obstructing the effects of good instruction and wholesome reproof; as we did before remark and declare. Further,

6 He that useth this kind of speech doth, as harm and trouble others, so create many great inconveniences and mischiefs to himself thereby. Nothing so inflameth the wrath of men, so provoketh their enmity, so breedeth lasting hatred and spite, as do contumelious words. They are often called swords and arrows; and as such they pierce deeply, and cause most grievous smart; which men feeling are enraged, and accordingly will strive to requite them in the like manner, and in all other obvious ways of revenge. Hence strife, clamour and tumult, care, suspicion and fear, danger and trouble, sorrow and regret, do seize on the reviler; and he is sufficiently punished for this dealing. No

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Ps. xv. 3.

Prov. xvii.  
4.Ps. lix. 7;  
lxiv. 3;  
lvii. 4;  
lii. 2.  
Prov. xii.  
18; xxx.  
14.  
Job v. 21.  
Prov. x.  
31.

<sup>t</sup> It is always taken as an argument of ill-will. *Maledicus a malefico non distat, nisi occasione.*—Quint. xii. 9. [9.]

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man can otherwise than live in perpetual fear of reciprocal like usage from him, whom he is conscious of having so abused. Whence, if not justice or charity toward others, yet love and pity of ourselves should persuade us to forbear it as disquietful, incommodious, and mischievous to us.

We should indeed certainly enjoy much love, much concord, much quiet, we should live in great safety and security, we should be exempted from much care and fear, if we would restrain ourselves from abusing and offending our neighbour in this kind: being conscious of so just and innocent demeanour toward him, we should converse with him in a pleasant freedom and confidence, not suspecting any bad language or ill usage from him.

7 Hence, with evidently good reason, is he that useth such language called a fool: and he that abstaineth from it is commended as wise. *A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes. A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul. He that refraineth his tongue is wise. In the tongue of the wise is health. He that keepeth his lips keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his mouth (that is, in evil-speaking, gaping with clamour and vehemency) shall have destruction. The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious: but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself. Death and life are in the power of the tongue; and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof; that is, of the one or the other, answerably to the kind of speech they choose.*

In fine, very remarkable is that advice, or resolution of the grand point concerning the best way of living happily, in the Psalmist: *What man is he*

Ps. xxxiv.  
12, 13.



*that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.* Abstinence from ill-speaking he seemeth to propose as the first step toward the fruition of a durably-happy life.

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8 Lastly, we may consider that it is a grievous perverting the design of speech, (that excellent faculty, which so much distinguisheth us from, so highly advanceth us above, other creatures,) to use it to the defaming and disquieting our neighbour. It was given us as an instrument of beneficial commerce, and delectable conversation; that with it we might assist and advise, might cheer and comfort one another: we therefore, in employing it to the disgrace, vexation, damage or prejudice in any kind, of our neighbour, do foully abuse it; and so doing, render ourselves indeed worse than dumb beasts<sup>u</sup>: for better far it were that we could say nothing, than that we should speak ill.

*Now the God of grace and peace make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Heb. xiii.  
20, 21.

<sup>u</sup> Mutos nasci, et egero omni ratione, satius fuisset, quam providentiæ munera in mutuum perniciem convertere.—Quint. xii. 1. [2.]

## SERMON XIX.

### THE FOLLY OF SLANDER.

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PROV. X. 18.

*He that uttereth slander is a fool.*

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GENERAL declamations against vice and sin are indeed excellently useful, as rousing men to consider and look about them: but they do often want effect, because they only raise confused apprehensions of things, and indeterminate propensions to action; the which usually, before men thoroughly perceive or resolve what they should practise, do decay and vanish. As he that cries out fire doth stir up people, and inspireth them with a kind of hovering tendency every way, yet no man thence to purpose moveth, until he be distinctly informed where the mischief is; then do they, who apprehend themselves concerned, run hastily to oppose it: so, till we particularly discern where our offences lie, (till we distinctly know the heinous nature and the mischievous consequences of them,) we scarce will effectually apply ourselves to correct them. Whence it is requisite, that men should be particularly acquainted with their sins, and by proper arguments be dissuaded from them.

In order whereto I have now selected one sin to describe, and to dissuade from, being in nature as vile, and in practice as common, as any other

whatever that hath prevailed among men. It is  
slander, a sin which in all times and places hath  
been epidemical and rife; but which especially doth  
seem to reign and rage in our age and country.

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There are principles innate to men, which ever have, and ever will incline them to this offence. Eager appetites to secular and sensual goods; violent passions, urging the prosecution of what men affect; wrath and displeasure against those who stand in the way of compassing their desires; emulation and envy toward those who hap to succeed better, or to attain a greater share in such things; excessive self-love; unaccountable malignity and vanity, are in some degrees connatural to all men, and ever prompt them to this dealing, as appearing the most efficacious, compendious, and easy way of satisfying such appetites, of promoting such designs, of discharging such passions. Slander thence hath always been a principal engine, whereby covetous, ambitious, envious, ill-natured, and vain persons have strove to supplant their competitors, and advance themselves; meaning thereby to procure, what they chiefly prize and like, wealth, or dignity, or reputation, favour and power in the court, respect and interest with the people.

But, from especial causes, our age peculiarly doth abound in this practice: for, besides the common dispositions inclining thereto, there are conceits newly coined, and greedily entertained by many, which seem purposely levelled at the disparagement of piety, charity, and justice, substituting interest in the room of conscience, authorizing and commending, for good and wise, all



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ways serving to private advantage. There are implacable dissensions, fierce animosities, and bitter zeals sprung up; there is an extreme curiosity, niceness, and delicacy of judgment; there is a mighty affectation of seeming wise and witty by any means; there is a great unsettlement of mind, and corruption of manners, generally diffused over people: from which sources it is no wonder that this flood hath so overflown, that no banks can restrain it, no fences are able to resist it; so that ordinary conversation is full with it, and no demeanour can be secure from it.

If we do mark what is done in many (might I not say, in most) companies, what is it, but one telling malicious stories of, or fastening odious characters upon another? What do men commonly please themselves in so much, as in carping and harshly censuring, in defaming and abusing their neighbours? Is it not the sport and diversion of many, to cast dirt in the faces of all they meet with; to bespatter any man with foul imputations? Doth not in every corner a Momus lurk, from the venom of whose spiteful or petulant tongue no eminency of rank, dignity of place, or sacredness of office, no innocence or integrity of life, no wisdom or circumspection in behaviour, no good nature, or benignity in dealing and carriage, can protect any person? Do not men assume to themselves a liberty of telling romances, and framing characters concerning their neighbour, as freely as a poet doth about Hector or Turnus, Thersites or Draucus? Do they not usurp a power of playing with, of tossing about, of tearing in pieces their neighbour's good name, as if it were the veriest

toy in the world? Do not many, *Having a form of godliness*, (some of them demurely, others confidently, both without any sense of, or remorse for what they do,) backbite their brethren? Is it not grown so common a thing to asperse causelessly, that no man wonders at it, that few dislike, that scarce any detest it? that most notorious calumniators are heard, not only with patience, but with pleasure; yea are even held in vogue and reverence, as men of a notable talent, and very serviceable to their party; so that slander seemeth to have lost its nature, and not to be now an odious sin, but a fashionable humour, a way of pleasing entertainment, a fine knack, or curious feat of policy; so that no man at least taketh himself or others to be accountable for what is said in this way? Is not, in fine, the case become such, that whoever hath in him any love of truth, any sense of justice or honesty, any spark of charity toward his brethren, shall hardly be able to satisfy himself in the conversations he meeteth; but will be tempted, with the holy Prophet, to wish himself sequestered from society, and cast into solitude; repeating those words of his, *Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them: for they are—an assembly of treacherous men, and they bend their tongues like their bow for lies?* This he wished in an age so resembling ours, that I fear the description with equal patness may suit both: *Take ye heed* (said he then; and may we not advise the like now?) *every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk*

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<sup>2</sup> Tim. iii.  
5.

Jer. ix. 2,  
3; vi. 28.  
Ezek. xxii.

<sup>9</sup>.

Jer. ix. 4,

<sup>5</sup>.

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*with slanders. They will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity.*

Such being the state of things, obvious to experience, no discourse may seem more needful or useful, than that which serveth to correct or check this practice: the which I shall endeavour to do,  
1 By describing the nature, 2 By declaring the folly of it; or shewing it to be very true which the Wise Man here asserteth, *He that uttereth slander is a fool.* The which particulars I hope so to prosecute, that any man shall be able easily to discern, and ready heartily to detest this practice.

I. For explication of its nature, we may describe slander to be the uttering false (or equivalent to false, morally false) speech against our neighbour, in prejudice to his fame, his safety, his welfare, or concernment in any kind, out of malignity, vanity, rashness, ill-nature, or bad design. That which is in holy scripture forbidden and re-  
proved under several names and notions; of *Bearing false witness, False accusation, Railing censure, Sycophantry, Talebearing, Whispering, Backbiting, Supplanting, Taking up reproach*: which terms some of them do signify the nature, others denote the special kinds, others imply the manners, others suggest the ends of this practice. But it seemeth most fully intelligible by observing the several kinds and degrees thereof; as also by reflecting on the divers ways and manners of practising it.

Exod. xx.  
16.  
Ps. xxxv.  
11.  
Jude 9.  
2 Pet. ii.  
11.  
Luke iii.  
14;  
xix. 8.  
Lev. xix.  
16.  
Prov. xviii.  
8; xxvi.  
20; xvi. 28.  
Rom. i. 29.  
2 Cor. xii.  
20.  
Ps. xv. 3.  
Rom. i. 30.  
Jer. ix. 4.  
Ps. xv. 3.

The principal kinds thereof I observe to be these:

1 The grossest kind of slander is that which, in

the Decalogue, is called, *Bearing false testimony against our neighbour*; that is, flatly charging him with facts the which he never committed, and is nowise guilty of. As in the case of Naboth, when men were suborned to say, *Naboth did blaspheme God and the king*: and as was David's case, when he thus complained, *False witnesses did rise up, they laid to my charge things that I knew not of*. This kind in the highest way (that is, in judicial proceedings) is more rare; and of all men, they, who are detected to practise it, are held most vile and infamous; as being plainly the most pernicious and perilous instruments of injustice, the most desperate enemies of all men's right and safety that can be. But also out of the court, there are many knights-errant of the post, whose business it is to run about scattering false reports; sometimes loudly proclaiming them in open companies, sometimes closely whispering them in dark corners; thus infecting conversation with their poisonous breath: these no less notoriously are guilty of this kind, as bearing always the same malice, and sometimes breeding as ill effects.

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1 Kings  
xxi. 13.

Ps. xxxv.  
11.

2 Another kind is, affixing scandalous names, injurious epithets, and odious characters upon persons, which they deserve not. As when Corah and his complices did accuse Moses of being ambitious, unjust, and tyrannical: when the Pharisees called our Lord an impostor, a blasphemmer, a sorcerer, a glutton and wine-bibber, an incendiary and perverter of the people, one that spake against Cæsar, and forbad to give tribute: when the Apostles were charged of being pestilent, turbulent, factious and seditious fellows. This sort being

Numb. xvi.

3, 13, 14.

John xix.

7, 21.

Matt. xxvi.

65; ix. 3;

xii. 24;

xi. 19.

Luke xxiii.

2, 5, 14.

John xix.

12.

Luke xxiii.

2.

Acts xvii.

6; xxiv. 5.

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very common, and thence in ordinary repute not so bad, yet in just estimation may be judged even worse than the former; as doing to our neighbour more heavy and more irreparable wrong. For it imposeth on him really more blame, and that such which he can hardly shake off: because the charge signifieth habit of evil, and includeth many acts; then, being general and indefinite, can scarce be disproved. He, for instance, that calleth a sober man drunkard, doth impute to him many acts of such intemperance; some really past, others probably future; and no particular time or place being specified, how can a man clear himself of that imputation, especially with those who are not thoroughly acquainted with his conversation? So he that calleth a man unjust, proud, perverse, hypocritical, doth load him with most grievous faults, which it is not possible that the most innocent person should discharge himself from.

3 Like to that kind is this, aspersing a man's actions with harsh censures and foul terms, importing that they proceed from ill principles, or tend to bad ends; so as it doth not or cannot appear. Thus when we say of him that is generously hospitable, that he is profuse<sup>a</sup>; of him that is prudently frugal, that he is niggardly; of him that is cheerful and free in his conversation, that he is vain or loose; of him that is serious and resolute in a good way, that he is sullen or morose; of him that is

<sup>a</sup> At nos virtutes ipsas invertimus, atque  
Sincerum cupimus vas incrustare. Probus quis  
Nobiscum vivit: multum demissus homo; illi  
Tardo cognomen pingui damus. &c.

Hor. Sat. I. 3. 55.

conspicuous and brisk in virtuous practice, that it SERM. XIX.  
 is ambition or ostentation which acts him; of him  
 that is close and bashful in the like good way, that  
 it is sneaking stupidity, or want of spirit; of him  
 that is reserved, that it is craft; of him that is  
 open, that it is simplicity in him: when we ascribe  
 a man's liberality and charity to vain-glory or  
 popularity; his strictness of life and constancy in  
 devotion, to superstition or hypocrisy: when, I say,  
 we pass such censures, or impose such characters,  
 on the laudable or innocent practice of our neigh-  
 bours, we are indeed slanderers, imitating therein  
 the great calumniator, who thus did slander even  
 God himself, imputing his prohibition of the fruit  
 unto envy toward men; (*God, said he, doth know,* Gen. iii. 5.  
*that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be*  
*opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good*  
*and evil;*) who thus did ascribe the steady piety of  
 Job, not to a conscientious love and fear of God,  
 but to policy and selfish design; *Doth Job fear* Job i. 9 ;  
*God for nought?* ii. 5.

Whoever indeed pronounceth concerning his  
 neighbour's intentions, otherwise than as they are  
 evidently expressed by words, or signified by overt  
 actions, is a slanderer; because he pretendeth to  
 know, and dareth to aver, that which he no-ways  
 possibly can tell whether it be true; because the  
 heart is exempt from all jurisdiction here, is only  
 subject to the government and trial of another  
 world; because no man can judge concerning the  
 truth of such accusations; because no man can  
 exempt or defend himself from them: so that appa-  
 rently such practice doth thwart all course of jus-  
 tice and equity.

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Jer. xxiii.  
36.

Matt. xxvi.  
60, 61.  
John ii. 19.

Matt. xxvi.  
60.

Acts vi. 14.

Acts vi. 13.

4 Another kind is, perverting a man's words or actions disadvantageously by affected misconstruction. All words are ambiguous, and capable of different senses, (some fair, some more foul;) *All actions have two handles<sup>b</sup>*, one, that candour and charity will, another, that disingenuity and spite may, lay hold on: and in such cases, to misapprehend is a calumnious procedure, arguing malignant disposition and mischievous design. Thus when two men did witness that our Lord affirmed, *He could demolish the temple, and rear it again in three days*; although he did indeed speak words to that purpose, meaning them in a figurative sense, discernible enough to those who would candidly have minded his drift and way of speaking; yet they, who crudely alleged them against him, are called false witnesses. *At last, saith the Gospel, came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple, &c.* Thus also, when some certified of St Stephen as having said, that *Jesus of Nazareth should destroy that place, and change the customs that Moses delivered*; although probably he did speak words near to that purpose, yet are those men called false witnesses: *And, saith St Luke, they set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law.* Which instances plainly do shew, if we would avoid the guilt of slander, how careful we should be to interpret fairly and favourably the words and the actions of our neighbour.

5 Another sort of this practice is, partial and

<sup>b</sup> Πάν πρᾶγμα δύο ἔχει λαβὰς.—Epict. [Ench. cap. xliii.]

lame representation of men's discourse, or their practice; suppressing some part of the truth in them, or concealing some circumstances about them, which might serve to explain, to excuse, or to extenuate them. In such a manner easily, without uttering any logical untruth, one may yet grievously calumniate. Thus, suppose that a man speaketh a thing upon supposition, or with exception, or in way of objection, or merely for disputation sake, in order to the discussion or clearing of truth; he that should report him asserting it absolutely, unlimitedly, positively and peremptorily, as his own settled judgment, would notoriously calumniate. If one should be inveigled by fraud, or driven by violence, or slip by chance, into a bad place, or bad company; he that should so represent the gross of that accident as to breed an opinion of that person, that out of pure disposition and design he did put himself there, doth slanderously abuse that innocent person. The reporter in such cases must not think to defend himself, by pretending that he spake nothing false; for such propositions, however true in logic, may justly be deemed lies in morality, being uttered with a malicious and deceitful (that is, with a calumnious) mind, being apt to impress false conceits, and to produce hurtful effects concerning our neighbour. There are slanderous truths, as well as slanderous falsehoods: when truth is uttered with a deceitful heart, and to a base end, it becomes a lie. *He that speaketh truth, saith the Wise Man, sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.* Deceiving is the proper work of slander: and truth

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Prov. xii.

<sup>17.</sup>



**SERM.** abused to that end putteth on its nature, and will  
**XIX.** engage into like guilt<sup>c</sup>.

6 Another kind of calumny is, by instilling sly suggestions; which although they do not down-rightly assert falsehoods, yet they breed sinister opinions in the hearers; especially in those who from weakness or credulity, from jealousy or prejudice, from negligence or inadvertency, are prone to entertain them. This is done many ways; by propounding wily suppositions, shrewd insinuations, crafty questions, and specious comparisons, intimating a possibility, or inferring some likelihood of, and thence inducing to believe the fact. Doth not, saith this kind of slanderer, his temper incline him to do thus? may not his interest have swayed him thereto? had he not fair opportunity and strong temptation to it? hath he not acted so in like cases? Judge you therefore whether he did it not. Thus the close slanderer argueth; and a weak or prejudiced person is thereby so caught, that he presently is ready thence to conclude the thing done. Again; he doeth well, saith the sycophant, it is true; but why, and to what end? Is it not, as most men do, out of ill design? may he not dissemble now? may he not recoil hereafter? have not others made as fair a show? yet we know what came of it. Thus do calumnious tongues pervert the judgments of men to think ill of the

<sup>c</sup> Vid. Herm. Pastor. Where the Pastor observes, that the Devil doth in his temptations interpose some truths, serving to render his delusions passable.—[Quædam autem verba vera loquitur. Diabolus enim implet eum (prophetam inanem) spiritu suo, ut dejiciat aliquem ex justis.—Lib. II. Mandat. 10, 1. Cotel. Pat. Apost. Tom. I. fol. 97. c. 1.]

most innocent, and meanly of the worthiest actions. Even commendation itself is often used calumniously, with intent to breed dislike and ill-will toward a person commended in envious or jealous ears; or so as to give passage to dispraises, and render the accusations following more credible. It is an artifice commonly observed to be much in use there, where the finest tricks of supplanting are practised with greatest effect; so that, *Pessimum inimicorum genus, laudantes*<sup>d</sup>; there is no more pestilent enemy, than a malevolent praiser<sup>e</sup>. All these kinds of dealing, as they issue from the principles of slander, and perform its work, so they deservedly bear the guilt thereof.

7 A like kind is that of oblique and covert reflections; when a man doth not directly or expressly charge his neighbour with faults, but yet so speaketh, that he is understood, or reasonably presumed to do it. This is a very cunning and very mischievous way of slandering; for therein the sculking calumniator keepeth a reserve for himself, and cutteth off from the person concerned the means of defence. If he goeth to clear himself from the matter of such aspersions: What need, saith this insidious speaker, of that? must I needs mean you? did I name you? why do you then assume it to yourself? do you not prejudge yourself guilty? I did not, but your own conscience, it seemeth, doth accuse you. You are so jealous and suspicious, as persons over-wise or guilty use to be.

<sup>d</sup> [Tac. Agric. cap. xli.]

<sup>e</sup> Excusando exprobraret.—Id. Ann. i. [10.]

Καινὸς γὰρ δὴ τις οὗτος εὗρηται τρόπος διαβολῆς, τὸ, μὴ ψέγοντας, ἀλλ' ἐπαινοῦντας λυμαίνεσθαι τοὺς πέλας.—Polyb. iv. [87.]

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So meaneth this serpent out of the hedge, securely and unavoidably, to bite his neighbour; and is, in that respect, more base and more hurtful than the most flat and positive slanderer.

Matt. vii.  
3.

8 Another kind is that of magnifying and aggravating the faults of others; raising any small miscarriage into a heinous crime, any slender defect into an odious vice, and any common infirmity into a strange enormity; turning a small mote in the eye of our neighbour into a huge beam, a little dimple in his face into a monstrous wen. This is plainly slander, at least in degree, and according to the surplusage, whereby the censure doth exceed the fault. As he that, upon the score of a small debt, doth extort a great sum, is no less a thief, in regard to what amounts beyond his due, than if without any pretence he had violently or fraudulently seized on it: so is he a slanderer, that, by heightening faults or imperfections, doth charge his neighbour with greater blame, or loads him with more disgrace, than he deserves. It is not only slander to pick a hole where there is none, but to make that wider which is, so that it appeareth more ugly, and cannot so easily be mended. For charity is wont to extenuate faults, justice doth never exaggerate them. As no man is exempt from some defects, or can live free from some misdemeanours; so by this practice, every man may be rendered very odious and infamous.

9 Another kind of slander is, imputing to our neighbour's practice, judgment or profession, evil consequences (apt to render him odious, or despicable) which have no dependence on them, or connection with them. There do in every age occur

disorders and mishaps, springing from various complications of causes, working some of them in a more open and discernible, others in a more secret and subtle way; (especially from divine judgment and providence checking or chastising sin :) from such occurrences it is common to snatch occasion and matter of calumny. Those who are disposed this way are ready peremptorily to charge them upon whomever they dislike or dissent from, although without any apparent cause, or upon most frivolous and senseless pretences; yea, often, when reason sheweth the quite contrary, and they who are so charged are, in just esteem of all men, the least obnoxious to such accusations. So usually the best friends of mankind, those who most heartily wish the peace and prosperity of the world, and most earnestly to their power strive to promote them, have all the disturbances and disasters happening charged on them by those fiery vixens, who (in pursuance of their base designs, or gratification of their wild passions) really do themselves embroil things, and raise miserable combustions in the world. So it is, that they who have the conscience to do mischief, will have the confidence also to disavow the blame and the iniquity, to lay the burden of it on those who are most innocent. Thus, whereas nothing more disposeth men to live orderly and peaceably, nothing more conduceth to the settlement and safety of the public, nothing so much draweth blessings down from heaven upon the commonweal, as true Religion; yet nothing hath been more ordinary, than to attribute all the miscarriages and mischiefs that happened unto it; even those are laid at its door, which plainly do

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1 Kings  
xviii. 17,  
18.

John xi.  
48.

arise from the contempt or neglect of it; being the natural fruits, or the just punishments of irreligion. King Ahab, by forsaking God's commandments, and following wicked superstitions, had troubled Israel, drawing sore judgments and calamities thereon; yet had he the heart and the face to charge those events on the great assertor of piety, Elias: *Art thou he that troubleth Israel?* The Jews, by provocation of divine justice, had set themselves in a fair way toward desolation and ruin; this event to come they had the presumption to lay upon the faith of our Lord's doctrine: *If, said they, we let him alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come, and take away our place and nation:* whenas, in truth, a compliance with his directions and admonitions had been the only means to prevent those presaged mischiefs. And, *Si Tiberis ascenderit in mœnia*, if any public calamity did appear, then *Christianos ad leones*<sup>1</sup>, Christians must be charged and persecuted as the causes thereof. To them it was, that Julian and other pagans did impute all the concussions, confusions, and devastations falling upon the Roman empire. The sacking of Rome by the Goths they cast upon Christianity<sup>2</sup>: for the vindication of it from which reproach, St Austin did write those renowned books *De Civitate Dei*. So liable are the best and most innocent sort of men to be calumniously accused in this manner.

<sup>1</sup> Tertul. Apol. [cap. xl. Opp. p. 32 c.]

<sup>2</sup> Sic evaserunt multi, qui nunc Christianis temporibus detraxerunt, et mala, quæ illa civitas pertulit, Christo imputant.—De Civ. Dei, l. 1. [Opp. Tom. vii. col. 3 c.] *They (saith that great Father) detract from the Christian times, and impute the evils, which that city suffered, unto Christ.* Vid. iii. 31. [Ibid. col. 86.]

Another practice (worthily bearing the guilt of slander) is, being aiding and accessory thereto, by any-wise furthering, cherishing, abetting it. He that, by crafty significations of ill-will, doth prompt the slanderer to vent his poison; he that, by a willing audience and attention, doth readily suck it up, or who greedily swalloweth it down by credulous approbation and assent; he that pleasingly relisheth and smacketh at it, or expresseth a delightful complacence therein; as he is a partner in the fact, so he is a sharer in the guilt<sup>h</sup>. There are not only slanderous throats, but slanderous ears also; not only wicked inventions, which engender and brood lies, but wicked assents, which hatch and foster them. Not only the spiteful mother which conceiveth such spurious brats, but the midwife that helpeth to bring them forth, the nurse that feedeth them, the guardian that traineth them up to maturity, and setteth them forth to live in the world; as they do really contribute to their subsistence, so deservedly they partake in the blame due to them, and must be responsible for the mischief they do. For indeed, were it not for such free entertainers, such nourishers, such encouragers of them, slanders would commonly die in the womb, or prove still-born, or presently entering

SERM.  
XIX.

<sup>h</sup> David. Ps. ci. 5. *Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: Τοῦτον ἐξεδίωκον, him have I driven away, say the LXX.*

Neque vero illa justa est excusatio, referentibus aliis injuriam facere non possum. Nemo invito auditori libenter refert. Sagitta in lapidem nunquam figitur; interdum resiliens percutit dirigentem. Discat detractor, dum te videt non libenter audire, non facile detrahare.—Hier. ad Nepot. [Ep. xxxv. Opp. Tom. iv. p. ii. col. 265.]

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XIX.

into the cold air would expire, or for want of nourishment soon would starve. It is such friends and patrons of them who are the causes that they are so rife; they it is who set ill-natured, base, and designing people upon devising, searching after, and picking up malicious and idle stories. Were it not for such customers, the trade of calumniating would fall<sup>1</sup>. Many pursue it merely out of servility and flattery, to tickle the ears, to soothe the humour, to gratify the malignant disposition or ill-will of others; who upon the least discouragement would give over the practice. If therefore we would exempt ourselves from all guilt of slander, we must not only abstain from venting it, but forbear to regard or countenance it<sup>k</sup>: for, *He is* (saith the Wise Man) *a wicked doer, who giveth heed to false lips; and a liar, who giveth ear to a naughty tongue.* Yea, if we thoroughly would be clear from it, we must shew an aversation from hearing it, an unwillingness to believe it; an indignation against it; so either stifling it in the birth, or condemning

Prov. xvii.  
4.

<sup>1</sup> Possidius relateth of St Austin, that he had upon his table written these two verses:

Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam,

Hanc mensam indignam noverit esse sibi:

(*He that loveth by ill speech to gnaw the life of those who are absent, let him know himself unworthy to sit at this table; or, that this table is unfit for him.*) And if any there did use detraction, he was offended, and minded them of those verses, threatening also to leave the table, and withdraw to his chamber. [Nam et quosdam suos familiares coepiscopos illius scripturæ oblitos, et contra eam loquentes, tam aspere aliquando reprehendit, commotus ut diceret, aut delendos esse illos de mensa versus, aut se de media refectiōe ad suum cubiculum surrecturum.]—Possid. in Vit. S. Aug. cap. xxii. [Inter Opp. Aug. Tom. x. (App.) col. 272 F.]

<sup>k</sup> Οὐ παραδέξῃ ἀκοήν παραλάν, *Thou shalt not receive (or, take up) a false report,* saith the Law, Exod. xxiii. 1. LXX.

it to death being uttered<sup>1</sup>. This is the sure way SERM. XIX.  
to destroy it, and to prevent its mischief. If we  
would stop our ears<sup>m</sup>, we should stop the slander-  
er's mouth; if we would resist the calumniator, he James iv. 7.  
would fly from us: if we would reprove him, we  
should repel him<sup>n</sup>. For, *As the north wind driveth* Prov. xxv. 23.  
*away rain, so (the Wise Man telleth us) doth an*  
*angry countenance a backbiting tongue.*

These are the chief and most common kinds of slander; and there are several ways of practising them worthy our observing, that we may avoid them; namely these.

1 The most notoriously heinous way is, forging and immediately venting ill stories. As it is said of Doeg, *Thy tongue deviseth mischief*; and of another like companion, *Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit*: and as our Lord saith of the Devil, *When he speaketh a lie, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων λαλεῖ, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.* John viii. 44. Isai. xxxii. 7. This palpably is the supreme pitch of calumny, incapable of any qualification or excuse: hell cannot go beyond this; the cursed fiend himself cannot worse employ his wit, than in minting wrongful falsehoods.

2 Another way is, receiving from others, and

<sup>1</sup> Τὸ δυσπρόσδεκτον διαβολῆς.—M. Ant. i. § 5.

Beatus est, qui ita se contra hoc vitium armavit, ut apud eum detrahere nemo audeat.—Hier. [Paulinus ad Celant. Ep. cix. Opp. Tom. iv. p. ii. col. 816.]

<sup>m</sup> *Hedge thy ears with thorns, &c.*, Eccclus. xxviii. 24. Ita legit Cypri. Ep. lv. [Opp. p. 89.]

<sup>n</sup> Ἄν μάθωσιν οἱ κακῆγοροί, ὅτι τῶν διαβαλλομένων μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς αὐτοὺς ἀποστρεφόμεθα, παύσονται, καὶ αὐτοὶ τότε τῆς πονηρᾶς ταύτης συνηθείας, καὶ διορθώσονται τὸ ἀμάρτημα, καὶ ἐπαινέσονται μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς, ὡς σωτῆρας αὐτῶν γενομένους, καὶ εὐεργέτας ἀνακηρύξουσιν.—Chrys. Ἄνδρ. γ'. [Opp. Tom. vi. p. 479.]



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venting such stories, which they who do it certainly know, or may reasonably presume, to be false; the becoming hucksters of counterfeit wares, or factors in this vile trade. There is no false coiner, who hath not some complices and emissaries ready to take from his hand, and put off his money: and such slanderers at second hand are scarce less guilty than the first authors. He that breweth lies may have more wit and skill; but the broacher sheweth the like malice and wickedness. In this there is no great difference between the great Devil, that frameth scandalous reports, and the little imps, that run about and disperse them.

3 Another way is, when one, without competent examination, due weighing, and just reason, doth admit and spread tales prejudicial to his neighbour's welfare; relying for his warrant (as to the truth of them) upon any slight or slender authority°. This is a very common and current practice: men presume it lawful enough to say over whatever they hear; to report any thing, if they can quote an author for it. It is not, say they, my invention; I tell it as I heard it: *Sit fides penes auctorem*; let him that informed me undergo the blame, if it prove false. So do they conceive themselves excusable for being the instruments of injurious disgrace and damage to their neighbours. But they greatly mistake therein: for, as this practice commonly doth arise from the same wicked principles, at least in some degree, and produceth

° Τί διαπορθμεύεις τὸν λόγον οὐκ ἀληθῆ ὄντα; &c.—Chrys. in Hebr. [Orat. xxi. Opp. Tom. iv. p. 540.]

Δέον συσκιάζειν καὶ συγκρύπτειν τὰ ἐλαττώματα τῶν πλησίον· σὺ δὲ ἐκπομπεύεις προσχήματι φιλαγαθίας; &c.—Ibid.

altogether the like mischievous effects, as the wilful devising and conveying slander: so it no less thwarteth the rules of duty, and laws of equity; God hath prohibited it, and reason doth condemn it. *Thou shalt not* (saith God in the Law) *go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people:* as a tale-bearer, (as *Rachil*, that is,) as a merchant or trader in ill reports and stories concerning our neighbour, to his prejudice. Not only the framing them, but the dealing in them beyond reason or necessity, is interdicted. And it is part of a good man's character in the fifteenth Psalm, *Non accipit opprobrium, He taketh not up a reproach against his neighbour;* that is, he doth not easily entertain it, much less doth he effectually propagate it: and in our text, *He, it is said, that uttereth slander* (not only he that conceiveth it) *is a fool.*

And in reason, before exact trial and cognizance, to meddle with the fame and interest of another, is evidently a practice full of iniquity, such as no man can allow in his own case, or brook being used toward himself, without judging himself to be extremely abused by such reporters. In all reason and equity, (yea in all discretion,) before we yield credence to any report concerning our neighbour, or adventure to relate it, many things are carefully to be weighed and scanned. We should concerning our author consider, whether he be not a particular enemy, or disaffected to him; whether he be not ill-humoured, or a delighter in telling bad stories; whether he be not dishonest, or unregardful of justice in his dealings and discourse; whether he be not vain, or careless of what he saith; whether he be not light and credulous, or

SERM.  
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Lev. xix.  
16.

Prov. xviii.  
8; xxvi.  
22.

Ps. xv. 3.

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apt to be imposed upon by any small appearance; whether at least, in the present case, he be not negligent, or too forward and rash in speaking. We should also concerning the matter reported mind, whether it be possible or probable; whether suitable to the disposition of our neighbour, to his principles, to the constant tenor of his practice; whether the action imputed to him be not liable to misapprehension, or his words to misconstruction. All reason and equity do, I say, exact from us, diligently to consider such things, before we do either embrace ourselves, or transmit unto others, any story concerning our neighbour; lest unadvisedly we do him irreparable wrong and mischief. Briefly, we should take his case for our own, and consider whether we ourselves should be content, that, upon like grounds or testimonies, any man should believe or report disgraceful things concerning us. If we fail to do thus, we do (vainly, or rashly, or maliciously) conspire with the slanderer to the wrong of our innocent neighbour; and that in the Psalmist (by a parity of reason) may be transferred to us, *Thou hast consented unto the liar, and hast partaken with the author of calumny.*

Ps. l. 18.

4 Of kin to this way, is the assenting to popular rumours, and thence affirming matters of obloquy to our neighbour. Every one by experience knows how easily false news do rise, and how nimbly they scatter themselves; how often they are raised from nothing, how soon they from small sparks grow into a great blaze, how easily from one thing they are transformed into another: especially news of this kind, which do suit and feed the bad humour of the vulgar. 'Tis obvious to

Prov. xiv.  
15.

any man how true that is of Tacitus<sup>p</sup>, how void of SERM.  
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consideration, of judgment, of equity, the busy and  
talking part of mankind is. Whoever therefore  
gives heed to flying tales, and thrusts himself into  
the herd of those who spread them, is either  
strangely injudicious, or very malignantly disposed.  
If he want not judgment, he cannot but know,  
that when he complieth with popular fame, it is  
mere chance that he doth not slander, or rather it  
is odds that he shall do so: he consequently shew-  
eth himself to be indifferent whether he doth it or  
no, or rather that he doth incline to do it: whence,  
not caring to be otherwise, or loving to be a slan-  
derer, he in effect and just esteem is such; having  
at least a slanderous heart and inclination. He  
that puts it to the venture whether he lieth or no,  
doth *eo ipso* lie morally, as declaring no care or  
love of truth. *Thou shalt not* (saith the Law) *fol-* Exod.  
xxiii. 2.  
*low a multitude to do evil:* and with like reason we  
should not follow the multitude in speaking evil of  
our neighbour.

5 Another slanderous course is, to build cen-  
sures and reproaches upon slender conjectures, or  
uncertain suspicions, (those *Evil surmises*, *ὑπόνοιαι*  
*πονηραὶ*, which St Paul condemneth.) Of these 1 Tim. vi.  
occasion can never be wanting to them who seek Matt. ix. 4.  
them, or are ready to embrace them; no innocence,  
no wisdom can anywise prevent them; and if they

<sup>p</sup> Neque plebi judicium aut veritas.—Tac. [Hist. i. 32.]

Non est enim consilium in vulgo, non ratio, non discrimen, non  
diligentia.—Cic. pro Plancio. [iv. 9.]

Ex veritate pauca, ex opinione multa æstimat.—[Id. pro Rosc.  
Com. x. 29.]

Λαῶ μὴ πίστευε πολύτροπός ἐστιν δμιλος.—

Phocylides. [Ποίημα νουθετικόν. 89.]

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be admitted as grounds of defamation, no man's good name can be secure. But he, that, upon such accounts, dareth to asperse his neighbour, is, in moral computation, no less a slanderer, than if he did the like out of pure invention, or without any ground at all: for doubtful and false in this case differ little; to devise, and to divine, in matters of this nature, do import near the same. He that will judge or speak ill of others, ought to be well assured of what he thinks or says: he that asserteth that which he doth not know to be true, doth as well lie, as he that affirmeth that which he knoweth to be false; (for he deceiveth the hearers, begetting in them an opinion, that he is assured of what he affirms:) especially in dealing with the concernments of others, whose right and repute justice doth oblige us to beware of infringing, charity should dispose us to regard and tender as our own. It is not every possibility, every seeming, every faint show or glimmering appearance, which sufficeth to ground bad opinion, or reproachful discourse concerning our brother: the matter should be clear, notorious, and palpable, before we admit a disadvantageous conceit into our head, a distasteful resentment into our heart, a harsh word into our mouth about him. Men may fancy themselves sagacious and shrewd, (persons of deep judgment and fine wit they may be taken for,) when they can dive into others' hearts, and sound their intentions; when through thick mists, or at remote distances they can descry faults in them; when they collect ill of them by long trains, and subtle fetches of discourse: but in truth they do thereby rather bewray in themselves small love of truth,

care of justice, or sense of charity, together with little wisdom and discretion: for truth is only seen in a clear light; justice requireth strict proof: *Charity thinketh no evil, and believeth all things for the best; wisdom is not forward to pronounce before full evidence.* *He, saith the Wise Man, that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.* In fine, they who proceed thus, as it is usual that they speak falsely, as it is casual that they ever speak truly, as they affect to speak ill, true or false; so, worthily, they are to be reckoned among slanderers.

6 Another like way of slandering is, impetuous or negligent sputtering out of words, without minding what truth or consequence there is in them, how they may touch or hurt our neighbour. To avoid this sin, we must not only be free from intending mischief, but wary of effecting it; not only careful of not wronging one distinct person, but of harming any promiscuously; not only abstinent from aiming directly, but provident not to hit casually any person with obloquy. For, as he that dischargeth shot into a crowd, or so as not to look about regarding who may stand in the way, is no less guilty of doing mischief, and bound to make satisfaction to them he woundeth, than if he had aimed at some one person: so if we fling our bad words at random, which may light unluckily, and defame somebody, we become slanderers unawares, and before we think on it. This practice hath not ever all the malice of the worst slander, but it worketh often the effects thereof, and therefore doth incur its guilt and its punishment; especially it being commonly derived from ill temper, or from

SERM.  
XIX.

1 Cor. xiii.  
5, 7.

Prov. xviii.  
13.

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XIX.

bad habit, which we are bound to watch over, to curb, and to correct. The tongue is a sharp and parlous weapon, which we are bound to keep up in the sheath, or never to draw forth but advisedly, and upon just occasion; it must ever be wielded with caution and care: to brandish it wantonly, to lay about with it blindly and furiously, to slash and smite therewith any that happeth to come in our way, doth argue malice or madness.

7 It is an ordinary way of proceeding to calumniate, for men, reflecting upon some bad disposition in themselves, (although resulting from their own particular temper, from their bad principles, or from their ill custom,) to charge it presently upon others; presuming others to be like themselves: like the wicked person in the Psalm, *Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself*. This is to slander mankind first in the gross; then in retail, as occasion serveth, to asperse any man: this is the way of half-witted Machiavelians, and of desperate reprobates in wickedness, who, having prostituted their consciences to vice, for their own defence and solace, would shroud themselves from blame under the shelter of common pravity and infirmity<sup>a</sup>; accusing all men of that whereof they know themselves guilty. But surely, there can be no greater iniquity than this, that one man should undergo blame for the ill conscience of another.

Ps. l. 21.

These seem to be the chief kinds of slander, and most common ways of practising it. In which

<sup>a</sup> Remedium poenæ suæ arbitrantur, si nemo sit sanctus: si omnibus detrahatur: si turba sit pereuntium: si multitudo peccantium.—Hier. ad Asellam, [Ep. xxix. Opp. Tom. iv. p. ii. col. 67.]

description the folly thereof doth, I suppose, so clearly shine, that no man can look thereon without loathing and despising it, as not only a very ugly, but a most foolish practice. No man surely can be wise, who will suffer himself to be defiled therewith. But to render its folly more apparent, we shall display it; declaring it to be extremely foolish upon several accounts. But the doing this, in regard to your patience, we shall forbear at present.

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## SERMON XX.

### THE FOLLY OF SLANDER.

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PROV. X. 18.

*He that uttereth slander is a fool.*

SERM.  
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I HAVE formerly in this place, discoursing upon this text, explained the nature of the sin here condemned, with its several kinds and ways of practising.

II. I shall now proceed to declare the folly of it; and to make good by divers reasons the assertion of the Wise Man, that, *He who uttereth slander is a fool.*

I Slandering is foolish, as sinful and wicked.

All sin is foolish upon many accounts; as proceeding from ignorance, error, inconsiderateness, vanity; as implying weak judgment and irrational choice; as thwarting the dictates of reason and best rules of wisdom; as producing very mischievous effects to ourselves, bereaving us of the chief goods, and exposing us to the worst evils. What can be more egregiously absurd, than to dissent in our opinion and discord in our choice from infinite wisdom; to provoke by our actions sovereign justice and immutable severity; to oppose almighty power, and offend immense goodness; to render ourselves unlike, and contrary in our doings, our disposition, our state, to absolute perfection and

felicity? What can be more desperately wild, than SERM.  
XX.  
to disoblige our best friend, to forfeit his love and  
favour, to render him our enemy, who is our Lord  
and our Judge, upon whose mere will and disposal  
all our subsistence, all our welfare does absolutely  
depend? What greater madness can be conceived,  
than to deprive our minds of all true content here,  
and to separate our souls from eternal bliss here-  
after; to gall our consciences now with sore  
remorse, and to engage ourselves for ever in reme-  
diless miseries? Such folly doth all sin include:  
whence in scripture style, worthily, goodness and  
wisdom are terms equivalent; sin and folly do sig-  
nify the same thing.

If thence this practice be proved extremely  
sinful, it will thence sufficiently be demonstrated  
no less foolish. And that it is extremely sinful,  
may easily be shewed. It is the character of the  
superlatively wicked man; *Thou givest thy mouth* Ps. l. 19,  
*to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit; thou sittest* 20.  
*and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest*  
*thine own mother's son.* It is indeed plainly the  
blackest and most hellish sin that can be; that  
which giveth the grand fiend his names, and most  
expresseth his nature. He is 'Ο διάβολος, *The* Apoc. xii.  
*slanderer; Satan,* the spiteful adversary; *The old* 9, 10.  
*snake, or dragon,* hissing out lies, and spitting forth  
venom of calumnious accusation; *The accuser of*  
*the brethren,* a murderous, envious, malicious calum-  
niator; *The father of lies;* the grand defamer of John viii.  
God to man, of man to God, of one man to 44.  
another. And highly wicked surely must that  
practice be, whereby we grow namesakes to him,  
conspire in proceeding with him, resemble his

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disposition and nature. It is a complication, a comprisal, a collection and sum of all wickedness; opposite to all the principal virtues, (to veracity and sincerity, to charity and justice,) transgressing all the great commandments, violating immediately and directly all the duties concerning our neighbour.

Eph. iv.

25.

1 Pet. ii. 1.

Ps. xxxi. 5;

xxv. 10;

lxxxvi. 15;

lxxxix. 14;

cxlvi. 6.

Prov. xii.

22; vi. 17.

To lie simply is a great fault, being a deviation from that good rule, which prescribeth truth in all our words; rendering us unlike and disagreeable to God, who is the God of truth; (who loveth truth, and practiseth it in all his doings, who abominateth all falsehood;) including a treacherous breach of faith toward mankind; (we being all, in order to the maintenance of society, by an implicit compact, obliged by speech to declare our mind, to inform truly, and not to impose upon our neighbour;) arguing pusillanimous timorousness and impotency of mind, a distrust in God's help, and diffidence in all good means to compass our designs; begetting deception and error, a foul and ill-favoured brood: lying, I say, is upon such accounts a sinful and blameable thing: and of all lies those certainly are the worst, which proceed from malice, or from vanity, or from both, and which work mischief; such as slanders are.

Lev. xix.  
18.

Again, to bear any hatred or ill-will, to exercise enmity toward any man, to design or procure any mischief to our neighbour, whom even Jews were commanded to love as themselves, whose good, by many laws, and upon divers scores, we are obliged to tender as our own, is a heinous fault: and of this apparently the slanderer is most guilty in the highest degree. For evidently true it is

which the Wise Man affirmeth, *A lying tongue* SERM. XX.  
*hateth those that are afflicted with it*; there is no  
surer argument of extreme hatred; nothing but Prov. xxvi. 28.  
the height of ill-will can suggest this practice. The  
slanderer is an enemy, as the most fierce and out-  
rageous, so the most base and unworthy that can  
be: he fighteth with the most perilous and most  
unlawful weapon, in the most furious and foul way  
that can be. His weapon is an envenomed arrow,  
*Full of deadly poison, which He shooteth suddenly,* James iii. 8.  
*and feareth not*; a weapon which by no force can Ps. lxiv. 3,  
be resisted, by no art declined, whose impression is 4; lvii. 4.  
altogether inevitable and unsustainable. It is a  
most insidious, most treacherous and cowardly way  
of fighting; wherein manifestly the weakest and  
basest spirits have extreme advantage, and may  
easily prevail against the bravest and worthiest:  
for no man of honour or honesty can, in way of  
resistance or requital, deign to use it, but must  
infallibly without repugnance be borne down  
thereby. By it the vile practiser achieveth the  
greatest mischief that can be. His words are, as  
the Psalmist saith of Doeg, devouring words,  
*(Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful* Ps. lii. 4.  
*tongue:)* and, *A man, saith the Wise Man, that* Prov. xxv. 18; xii. 6;  
*beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul,* xvi. 27.  
*and a sword, and a sharp arrow*; that is, he is a  
complicated instrument of all mischiefs: he smiteth  
and bruisseth like a maul, he cutteth and pierceth  
like a sword, he thus doth hurt near at hand; and  
at distance, he woundeth like a sharp arrow, it is  
hard any where to evade him, or to get out of his  
reach. *Many, saith another wise man, the imita-* Ecclus. xxviii. 18-21.  
*tor of Solomon, have fallen by the edge of the sword:*

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but not so many as have fallen by the tongue. Well is he that is defended from it, and hath not passed through the venom thereof; who hath not drawn the yoke thereof, nor hath been bound in its bands. For the yoke thereof is a yoke of iron, and the bands thereof are bands of brass. The death thereof is an evil death, the grave were better than it. Incurable are the wounds which the slanderer inflicteth, irreparable the damages which he causeth, indelible the marks which he leaveth. No balsam can heal the biting of a sycophant<sup>a</sup>; no thread can stitch up a good name torn by calumnious defamation; no soap is able to cleanse from the stains aspersed by a foul mouth. *Aliquid adhærebit*; somewhat always of suspicion and ill opinion will stick in the minds of those who have given ear to slander. So extremely opposite is this practice unto the queen of virtues, charity. Its property indeed is, to believe all things, that is, all things for the best, and to the advantage of our neighbour; not so much as to suspect any evil of him, without unavoidably manifest cause: how much more, not to devise any falsehood against him? It covereth all things, studiously conniving at real defects, and concealing assured miscarriages: how much more, not divulging imaginary or false scandals? It disposeth to seek and further any the least good concerning him: how much more, will it hinder committing grievous outrage upon his dearest good name?

1 Cor. xiii.  
7.

Prov. xvii.  
9.

<sup>a</sup> Non est remedium adversus sycophantæ morsum.—[Erasm. Adag. p. 86. Elzev. Amstel. 1663.

(Αλλ' οὐκ ἔστι συκοφάντου δῆγματος.

Aristoph. Plut. 885.)]

Again, all injustice is abominable: to do any sort of wrong is a heinous crime; that crime, which of all most immediately tendeth to the dissolution of society, and disturbance of human life; which God therefore doth most loathe, and men have reason especially to detest. And of this the slanderer is most deeply guilty. *A witness of Belial scorneth judgment, and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity*, saith the Wise Man. He is indeed, according to just estimation, guilty of all kinds whatever of injury, breaking all the second table of commands respecting our neighbour. Most formally and directly, he beareth false witness against his neighbour: he doth covet his neighbour's goods; for 'tis constantly out of such an irregular desire, for his own presumed advantage, to dispossess his neighbour of some good, and transfer it on himself, that the slanderer uttereth his tale: he is ever a thief and robber of his good name, a deflourer and defiler of his reputation, an assassin and murderer of his honour<sup>b</sup>. So doth he violate all the rules of justice, and perpetrateth all sorts of wrong against his neighbour.

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Prov. xix.  
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Exod. xx.  
16, 17.

Isai. v. 23.

He may indeed, perhaps, conceive it no great matter that he committeth; because he doth not act in so boisterous and bloody a way, but only by words, which are subtile, slim, and transient things; upon his neighbour's credit only, which is no substantial or visible matter. He draweth, thinks he, no blood, nor breaketh any bones, nor impresseth any remarkable scar: 'tis only the soft air he breaketh with his tongue, 'tis only a slight charac-

<sup>b</sup> Dei episcopos linguæ gladio jugulastis, fundentes sanguinem non corporis, sed honoris.—Optat. Lib. II. [cap. 24. p. 46.]

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ter that he stampeth on the fancy, 'tis only an imaginary stain that he daubeth his neighbour with: therefore he supposeth no great wrong done, and seemeth to himself innocent, or very excusable. But these conceits arise from great inconsiderateness, or mistake; nor can they excuse the slanderer from grievous injustice. For, in dealing with our neighbour, and meddling with his property, we are not to value things according to our fancy, but according to the price set on them by the owner: we must not reckon that a trifle, which he prizeth as a jewel. Since then all men (especially men of honour and honesty) do, from a necessary instinct of nature, estimate their good name beyond any of their goods, yea, do commonly hold it more dear and precious than their very lives; we, by violently or fraudulently bereaving them of it, do them no less wrong, than if we should rob or cozen them of their substance, yea, than if we should maim their body, or spill their blood, or even stop their breath. If they as grievously feel it, and resent it as deeply, as they do any other outrage, the injury is really as great to them. Even the slanderer's own judgment and conscience might tell him so much: for they who most slight another's fame, are usually very tender of their own, and can with no patience endure that others should touch it: which demonstrates the inconsiderateness of their judgment, and the iniquity of their practice. It is an injustice not to be corrected or cured. Thefts may be restored, wounds may be cured; but there is no restitution or cure of a lost good name: it is therefore an irreparable injury.

Nor is the thing itself, in true judgment, con-

temptible; but in itself really very considerable. SERM. XX.  
*A good name, saith Solomon himself, (no fool,) is rather to be chosen than great riches; and loving favour rather than silver and gold.* Prov. xxii. 1; xv. 30. Eccles. vii. 1. In its consequences it is much more so; the chief interests of a man, the success of his affairs, his ability to do good, (for himself, his friends, his neighbour,) his safety, the best comforts and conveniences of his life, sometimes his life itself, depending thereon: so that whoever doth snatch or filch it from him, doth, not only according to his opinion, and in moral value, but in real effect, commonly rob, sometimes murder, ever exceedingly wrong his neighbour. It is often the sole reward of a man's virtue and all the fruit of his industry; so that, by depriving him of that, he is robbed of all his estate, and left stark naked of all, excepting a good conscience, which is beyond the reach of the world, and which no malice or misfortune can divest him of. Full then of iniquity, full of uncharitableness, full of all wickedness is this practice; and consequently full it is of folly. No man, one would think, of any tolerable sense, should dare, or deign to incur the guilt of a practice so vile and base, so indeed diabolical and detestable. But further more particularly.

2 The slanderer is plainly a fool; because he maketh wrong judgments and valuations of things, and accordingly driveth on silly bargains for himself, in result whereof he proveth a great loser. He means, by his calumnious stories, either to vent some passion boiling in him, or to compass some design which he affects, or to please some humour that he is possessed with: but is any of these



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things worth purchasing at so dear a rate? Can there be any valuable exchange for our honesty? Is it not more advisable to suppress our passion, or to let it evaporate otherwise, than to discharge it in so foul a way? Is it not better to let go a petty interest, than to further it by committing so notorious and heinous a sin; to let an ambitious project sink, than to buoy it up by such base means? Is it not wisdom rather to smother, or curb our humour, than by satisfying it thus to forfeit our innocence? Can any thing in the world be so considerable, that, for its sake, we should defile our souls by so foul a practice, making shipwreck of a good conscience, abandoning honour and honesty, incurring all the guilt and all the punishment due to so enormous a crime? Is it not far more wisdom, contentedly to see our neighbour to enjoy credit and success, to flourish and thrive in the world, than, by such base courses, to sully his reputation, to rifle him of his goods, to supplant or cross him in his affairs? We do really, when we think thus to depress him, and to climb up to wealth or credit by the ruins of his honour, but debase ourselves. Whatever comes of it, (whether he succeeds, or is disappointed therein,) assuredly he, that useth such courses, will himself be the greatest loser and deepest sufferer. 'Tis true which the Wise Man saith, *The getting of treasures by a lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.* And, *Woe unto them, saith the Prophet, that draw iniquity with cords of vanity; that is, who, by falsehood, endeavour to compass unjust designs.*

Prov. xxi.  
6.

Isai. v. 18.

But it is not, perhaps, he will pretend, for to

assuage a private passion, or to promote his particular concernment, that he makes so bold with his neighbour, or deals so harshly with him; but for the sake of orthodox doctrine, for advantage of the true church, for the advancement of public good, he judgeth it expedient to asperse him. This indeed is the covert of innumerable slanders: zeal for some opinion, or some party, beareth out men of sectarian and factious spirits in such practices; they may do, they may say any thing, for those fine ends. What is a little truth, what is any man's reputation, in comparison to the carrying on such brave designs? But (to omit that men do usually prevaricate in these cases; that it is not commonly for love of truth, but of themselves, not so much for the benefit of their sect, but for their own interest, that they calumniate) this plea will nowise justify such practice. For truth and sincerity, equity and candour, meekness and charity are inviolably to be observed, not only toward dissenters in opinion, but even toward declared enemies of truth itself; we are to bless them, (that is, to speak well of them, and to wish well to them,) not to curse them, (that is, not to reproach them, or to wish them ill, much less to belie them.) Truth also, as it cannot ever need, so doth it always loathe and scorn the patronage and the succour of lies; it is able to support and protect itself by fair means; it will not be killed upon a pretence of saving it, or thrive by its own ruin. Nor indeed can any party be so much strengthened and underpropt, as it will be weakened and undermined, by such courses: no cause can stand firm upon a bottom so loose and slippery, as falsehood

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is: all the good a slanderer can do is to disparage what he would maintain. In truth, no heresy can be worse than that would be, which should allow to play the devil in any case. He that can dispense with himself to slander a Jew or a Turk, doth in so doing render himself worse than either of them by profession are: for even they, and even Pagans themselves, disallow the practice of inhumanity and iniquity. All men by light of nature avow truth to be honourable, and faith to be indispensably observed. He doth not understand what it is to be Christian, or careth not to practise according thereto, who can find in his heart, in any case, upon any pretence, to calumniate. In fine, to prostitute our conscience, or sacrifice our honesty, for any cause, to any interest whatever, can never be warrantable or wise. Further,

3 The slanderer is a fool, because he useth improper means and preposterous methods of effecting his purposes. As there is no design worth the carrying on by ways of falsehood and iniquity; so is there scarce any, (no good or lawful one at least,) which may not more surely, more safely, more cleverly be achieved by means of truth and justice. Is not always the straight way more short than the oblique and crooked? Is not the plain way more easy than the rough and cragged? Is not the fair way more pleasant and passable than the foul? Is it not better to walk in paths that are open and allowed, than in those that are shut up and prohibited? than to clamber over walls, to break through fences, to trespass

Prov. x. 9. upon enclosures? Surely yes: *He that walketh uprightly walketh surely.* Using strict veracity

and integrity, candour and equity, is the best method of accomplishing good designs. Our own industry, good use of the parts and faculties God hath given us, embracing fair opportunities, God's blessing and providence, are sufficient means to rely upon for procuring, in an honest way, whatever is convenient for us. These are ways approved, and amiable to all men; they procure the best friends and fewest enemies; they afford to the practiser a cheerful courage, and good hope; they meet with less disappointment, and have no regret or shame attending them. He that hath recourse to the other base means, and maketh lies his refuge, as he renounceth all just and honest means, as he disclaimeth all hope in God's assistance, and forfeiteth all pretence to his blessing; so he cannot reasonably expect good success, or be satisfied in any undertaking. The supplanting way, indeed, seems the most curt and compendious way of bringing about dishonest or dishonourable designs: but as a good design is certainly dishonoured thereby, so is it apt thence to be defeated; it raising up enemies and obstacles, yielding advantages to whoever is disposed to cross us. As in trade it is notorious, that the best course to thrive is by dealing squarely and truly; any fraud or cozenage appearing there doth overthrow a man's credit, and drive away custom from him: so in all other transactions, as he that dealeth justly and fairly will have his affairs proceed roundly, and shall find men ready to comply with him; so he that is observed to practise falsehood, will be declined by some, opposed by others, disliked by all: no man scarce willingly will have to do with him; he is

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Isai. xxviii.  
15, 17.  
Jer. xxviii.  
15.

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4 Lastly, The slanderer is a very fool, as bringing many great inconveniences, troubles, and mischiefs on himself.

Prov. xviii. First, *A fool's mouth, saith the Wise Man, is*  
7; xiii. 3; *his destruction, his lips are the snare of his soul:*  
xviii. 21. and if any kind of speech is destructive and dangerous, then is this certainly most of all; for by no means can a man inflame so fierce anger, impress so stiff hatred, raise so deadly enmity against himself, and consequently so endanger his safety, ease, and welfare, as by this practice. Men can more easily endure, and sooner will forgive, any sort of abuse than this; they will rather pardon a robber of their goods, than a defamer of their good name.

Secondly, Such an one, indeed, is not only odious to the person immediately concerned, but generally to all men that observe his practice, every man presently will be sensible, how easily it may be his own case, how liable he may be to be thus abused, in a way against which there is no guard or defence. The slanderer therefore is apprehended a common enemy, dangerous to all men; and thence rendereth all men averse from him, and ready to cross him<sup>c</sup>. Love and peace, tranquillity and security, can only be maintained by innocent and true dealing: so the Psalmist  
Ps. xxxiv. hath well taught us; *What man is he that desireth*  
12, 13.

c

Ecquid

Ad te post paulo ventura pericula sentis?

Hor. Epist. i. 18, 82.

Sibi quisque timet, quanquam est intactus, et odit.

Id. [Sat. ii. 1, 23.]

*life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.* SERM.  
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Thirdly, all wise, all noble, all ingenuous and honest persons have an aversion from this practice, and cannot entertain it with any acceptance or complacence. *A righteous man hateth lying,* Prov. xiii. saith the Wise Man. It is only ill-natured and <sup>5.</sup> ill-nurtured, unworthy and naughty people, that are willing auditors or encouragers thereof. *A wicked doer,* Prov. xvii. saith the Wise Man again, *giveth heed* <sup>4.</sup> *to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.* All love of truth, and regard to justice, and sense of humanity, all generosity and ingenuity, all charity and good-will to men, must be extinct in those who can with delight, or indeed with patience, lend an ear, or give any countenance to a slanderer: and is not he a very fool, who chooseth to displease the best, only soothing the worst of men?

Fourthly, The slanderer indeed doth banish himself from all conversation and company, or, intruding into it, becomes very disgustful thereto: for he, worthily, is not only looked upon as an enemy to those whom he slandereth, but to those also, upon whom he obtrudeth his calumnious discourse. He not only wrongeth the former by the injury, but he mocketh the latter by the falsehood of his stories; implicitly charging his hearers with weakness and credulity, or with injustice and pravity.

Fifthly, He also derogateth wholly from his own credit, in all matters of discourse. For he that dareth thus to injure his neighbour, who can

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trust him in any thing he speaks? What will not he say to please his vile humour, or further his base interest? What (thinks any man) will he scruple or boggle at, who hath the heart, in thus doing wrong and mischief, to imitate the Devil? Further,

Sixthly, This practice is perpetually haunted with most troublesome companions, inward regret and self-condemnation, fear and disquiet: the conscience of dealing so unworthily doth smite and rack him; he is ever in danger, and thence in fear to be discovered, and requited for it<sup>d</sup>. Of these passions the manner of his behaviour is a manifest indication: for men do seldom vent their slanderous reports openly and loudly, to the face, or in the ear of those who are concerned in them; but do utter them in a low voice, in dark corners, out of sight and hearing, where they conceit themselves at present safe from being called to an account.

Ps. lix. 7. *Swords, saith the Psalmist of such persons, are in their lips; Who, say they, doth hear? And,*

Ps. ci. 5. *Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off,* saith David again, intimating the common

Ps. xci. 6. *manner of this practice. Calumny is like The plague, that walketh in darkness. Hence appositely are the practisers thereof termed whisperers and backbiters: their heart suffers them not openly to avow, their conscience tells them they cannot fairly defend their practice. Again,*

<sup>d</sup> Ὁ μὲν γὰρ κακῶς εἰπὼν ἐναγώνιος λοιπὸν ἐστίν, ὑποπτεύει τε καὶ δέδοικε καὶ μετανοεῖ καὶ κατεσθίει τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γλῶτταν, δεδοικὼς καὶ τρέμων, μήποτε εἰς ἑτέρους ἐξενεχθὲν τὸ ῥῆμα μέγαν ἐπαγάγῃ τὸν κίνδυνον, καὶ περιττὴν ἔχθραν καὶ ἀνόνητον ἐργάσῃται τοῖς εἰρηκόσι. &c.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. γ'. [Opp. Tom. vi. p. 479.]

Seventhly, The consequent of this practice is commonly shameful disgrace, with an obligation to retract, and render satisfaction: for seldom doth calumny pass long without being detected and confuted. *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known:* and, *The lip of truth shall be established for ever; but a lying lip is but for a moment,* saith the great observer of things. And when the slander is disclosed, the slanderer is obliged to excuse, (that is, to palliate one lie with another, if he can do it,) or forced to recant, with much disgrace and extreme displeasure to himself: he is also many times constrained, with his loss and pain, to repair the mischief he hath done.

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Ps. lxi.  
ii.

Wisd. i. 11.

Prov. x. 9;

xii. 19.

Eighthly, To this, in likelihood, the concerns of men, and the powers which guard justice, will forcibly bring him: and certainly his conscience will bind him thereto; God will indispensably exact it from him. He can never have any sound quiet in his mind, he can never expect pardon from Heaven, without acknowledging his fault, repairing the wrong he hath done, restoring that good name of which he dispossessed his neighbour: for in this, no less than in other cases, conscience cannot be satisfied, remission will not be granted, except due restitution be performed: and of all restitutions this surely is the most difficult, most laborious, and most troublesome. It is nowise so hard to restore goods stolen or extorted, as to recover a good opinion lost, to wipe off aspersions cast on a man's name, to cure a wounded reputation: the most earnest and diligent endeavour can hardly ever effect this, or spread the plaster so far as the



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sore hath reached. The slanderer therefore doth engage himself into great straits, incurring an obligation to repair an almost irreparable mischief.

Exod. xxi.  
24.  
Matt. v.  
38.

Ninthly, This practice doth also certainly revenge itself, imposing on its actor a perfect retaliation<sup>\*</sup>; *A tooth for a tooth*; an irrecoverable infamy to himself, for the infamy he causeth to others. Who will regard his fame, who will be concerned to excuse his faults, who so outrageously abuseth the reputation of others? He suffereth justly, he is paid in his own coin, will any man think, who doth hear him reproached<sup>†</sup>.

Rev. xxi.  
27; xxii.  
15.

Rev. xxi.  
8.

1 Cor. vi.  
10; v. 11.

Tenthly, In fine, the slanderer (if he doth not, by serious and sore repentance, retract his practice) doth banish himself from heaven and happiness, doth expose himself to endless miseries and sorrows. For if none that maketh a lie shall enter into the heavenly city; if without those mansions of joy and bliss every one must eternally abide that loveth or maketh a lie; if, Πᾶσι τοῖς ψευδέσι, *To all liars their portion is assigned in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone*; then assuredly the capital liar, the slanderer, (who lieth most injuriously and mischievously,) shall be far excluded from felicity, and thrust down into the depth of that miserable place. If, as St Paul saith, no railer, or evil-speaker, shall inherit the kingdom of God; how far thence shall they be removed, who without any truth or justice do speak ill of and reproach

<sup>\*</sup> Et delator habet, quod dabat, exilium.

[Mart. de Spect. iv. 4.]

<sup>†</sup> It was the punishment of slanderers in the law. *Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother.*—Deut. xix. 19.

their neighbour? If for every Ἀργὸν ῥῆμα, *Idle*, or vain, *word* we must render a strict account; how much more shall we be severely reckoned with for this sort of words, so empty of truth and void of equity; words that are not only negatively vain, or useless, but positively vain, as false, and spoken to bad purpose? If slander, perhaps, here may evade detection, or scape deserved punishment; yet infallibly hereafter, at the dreadful day, it shall be disclosed, irreversibly condemned, inevitably persecuted with condign reward of utter shame and sorrow.

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Matt. xii.  
36.

Is not he then, he who, out of malignity, or vanity, to serve any design, or soothe any humour in himself or others, doth, by committing this sin, involve himself into all these great evils, both here and hereafter, a most desperate and deplorable fool?

Having thus described the nature of this sin, and declared the folly thereof, we need, I suppose, to say no more for dissuading it; especially to persons of a generous and honest mind, who cannot but scorn to debase and defile themselves by so mean and vile a practice; or to those who seriously do profess Christianity, that is, the Religion which peculiarly above all others prescribeth constant truth, strictest justice, and highest charity.

I shall only add, that, since our faculty of speech (wherein we do excel all other creatures) was given us, as, in the first place, to praise and glorify our Maker, so, in the next, to benefit and help our neighbour; as an instrument of mutual succour and delectation, of friendly commerce and pleasant converse together; for instructing and ad-

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vising, comforting and cheering one another; it is an unnatural perverting, and an irrational abuse thereof, to employ it to the damage, disgrace, vexation, or wrong in any kind of our brother. Better indeed had we been as brutes without its use, than we are, if, so worse than brutishly, we abuse it.

Finally, All these things being considered, we may, I think, reasonably conclude it most evidently true, that, *He which uttereth slander is a fool.*

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## SERMON XXI.

### AGAINST DETRACTION.

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JAMES IV. 11.

*Speak not evil one of another, brethren.*

ONE half of our Religion consisteth in charity to-  
ward our neighbour; and of that charity much  
the greater part seemeth exercised in speech; for,  
as speaking doth take up the greatest part of our  
life, (our quick and active mind continually vent-  
ing its thoughts, and discharging its passions  
thereby; all our conversation and commerce pass-  
ing through it, having a large influence upon all  
our practice,) so speech, commonly, having our  
neighbour and his concernments for its objects, it  
is necessary, that either most of our charity will be  
employed therein, or that by it we shall most  
offend against that great duty, together with its  
associates, justice and peace.

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And all offences of this kind (which transgress  
charity, violate justice, or infringe peace) may, per-  
haps, be forbidden in this apostolical precept; for  
the word *Καταλαλεῖν*, according to its origination,  
and according to some use, doth signify all kind of  
obloquy, and so may comprise slander, harsh cen-  
sure, reviling, scoffing, and the like kinds of speak-  
ing against our neighbour; but in stricter accepta-  
tion, and according to peculiar use, it denoteth  
that particular sort of obloquy, which is called de-

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traction, or backbiting: so, therefore, we may be allowed to understand it here; and accordingly I now mean to describe it, and to dissuade from its practice.

There is, between this and the other chief sorts of obloquy, (slander, censuring and reviling,) much affinity, yet there is some difference; for slander involveth an imputation of falsehood; reviling includeth bitter and foul language; but detraction may be couched in truth, and clothed in fair language; it is a poison often infused in sweet liquor, and ministered in a golden cup. It is of nearer kin to censuring, and accordingly St James here coupleth it thereto: *He that detracteth from a brother, and he that censureth his brother, backbiteth the law, and censureth the law*: yet may these two be distinguished; for censuring seemeth to be of more general purport, extending indifferently to all kinds of persons, qualities, and actions, which it unduly taxeth; but detraction especially respecteth worthy persons, good qualities, and laudable actions, the reputation of which it aimeth to destroy, or to impair.

This sort of ill practice, so rife in use, so base in its nature, so mischievous in its effects, it shall be my endeavour to describe, that we may know it; and to dissuade, that we may shun it.

It is the fault, (opposite to that part of charity and goodness, which is called ingenuity or candour,) which, out of naughty disposition or design, striveth to disgrace worthy persons, or to disparage good actions, looking for blemishes and defects in them, using care and artifice to pervert or misrepresent things to that purpose.

An honest and charitable mind disposeth us, when we see any man endued with good qualities, and pursuing a tenor of good practice, to esteem such a person, to commend him, to interpret what he doeth to the best, not to suspect any ill of him, or to seek any exception against him; it inclineth us, when we see any action materially good, to yield it simply due approbation and praise, without searching for, or surmising any defect, in the cause or principle, whence it cometh, in the design or end to which it tendeth, in the way or manner of performing it. A good man would be sorry to have any good thing spoiled: as to find a crack in a fair building, a flaw in a fine jewel, a canker in a goodly flower, is grievous to any indifferent man; so would it be displeasing to him to observe defects in a worthy person, or commendable action; he therefore will not easily entertain a suspicion of any such, he never will hunt for any. But, on the contrary, it is the property of a detractor, when he seeth a worthy person, whom he doth not affect, or whom he is concerned to wrong, to survey him thoroughly, and to sift all his actions, with intent to descry some failing, or any semblance of a fault, by which he may disparage him; when he vieweth any good action, he peereth into it, labouring to espy some pretence to derogate from the commendation apparently belonging to it. This, in general, is the nature of this fault. But we may get a fuller understanding of it, by considering more distinctly some particular acts, wherein it is commonly exercised, or the several paths in which the detracting spirit treadeth: such are these following.

I A detractor is wont to represent persons and

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actions under the most disadvantageous circumstances he can, setting out those, which may cause them to appear odious or despicable, slipping over those, which may commend or excuse them. There is no person so excellent, who is not, by his circumstances, forced to omit some things, which would become him to do, if he were able; to perform some things lamely, and otherwise than he would do, if he could reach it; no action so worthy, but may have some defect in matter, or manner, incapable of redress<sup>a</sup>; and he, that representeth such person or action, leaving out those excusing circumstances, doth tend to beget a bad or mean opinion of them, robbing them of their due value and commendation: thus to charge a man of not having done a good work, when he had not the power or opportunity to perform it, or is, by cross accidents, hindered from doing it according to his desire; to suggest the action was not done exactly, in the best season, in the rightest mode, in the most proper place, with expressions, looks, or gestures most convenient, these are tricks of a detractor; who, when he cannot deny the metal to be good, and the stamp true, he clippeth it, and so would reject it from being current.

2 He is wont to misconstrue ambiguous words, or to misinterpret doubtful appearances of things: let a man speak never so well, or act never so fairly, yet a detractor will say his words may bear this ill sense, his actions may tend to that bad purpose; we may therefore suspect his meaning, and cannot yield him a full approbation.

<sup>a</sup> Πολὺ τὸ οὐχ ὑπακούον, οὐδὲ δεχόμενον τὸ εὔ.—Theophrastus [in *Metaph.* p. 271. l. 10. Ed. Basil. 1541.]

3 He is wont to misname the qualities of persons or things, assigning bad appellations or epithets to good or indifferent qualities: the names of virtue and vice do so nearly border in signification, that it is easy to transfer them from one to another, and to give the best quality a bad name<sup>b</sup>. Thus by calling a sober man sour, a cheerful man vain, a conscientious man morose, a devout man superstitious, a free man prodigal, a frugal man sordid, an open man simple, a reserved man crafty, one that standeth upon his honour and honesty proud, a kind man ambitiously popular, a modest man sullen, timorous, or stupid, is a very easy way to detract, and no man thereby can scape being disparaged.

4 He doth imperfectly characterize persons, so as studiously to veil or faintly to disclose their virtues and good qualities, but carefully to expose, and fully to aggravate or amplify any defects or failings in them. The detractor will pretend to give a character of his neighbour, but, in so doing, he stiflcth what may commend him, and blazoneth what may disgrace him; like an envious painter he hideth, or in dusky colours shadoweth, all the graceful parts and goodly features, but setteth out all blemishes in the briskest light, and most open view. Every face hath in it some mole, spot, or wrinkle; there is no man that hath not, as they speak, some blind place, some blemishes in his nature or temper, some faults contracted by edu-

<sup>b</sup> At nos virtutes ipsas invertimus, atque  
Sincerum cupimus vas incrustare. Probus quis  
Nobiscum vivit: multum demissus homo; illi  
Tardo cognomen pingui damus, &c.

Hor. [Sat. I. 3. 55.]



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cation or custom, somewhat amiss proceeding from ignorance, or misapprehension of things: these (although they be in themselves small and inconsiderable, although they are some of them involuntary, and thence inculpable, although they be much corrected or restrained by virtuous discipline, although they are compensated by greater virtues, yet these) the detractor snatcheth, mouldeth, and out of them frameth an idea of his neighbour, apt to breed hatred or contempt of him, in an unwary spectator; whereas, were charity, were equity, were humanity to draw the person, it, representing his qualities with just advantage, would render him lovely and venerable.

5 He is wont not to commend or allow any thing absolutely and clearly, but always interposing some exception, to which he would have it seem liable; the man indeed, saith he, doth seem to have this or that laudable quality; the action hath a fair appearance, but then if he can, he blurteth out some spiteful objection; if he can find nothing colourable to say against it, yet he will seem to know and to suppress somewhat; but, saith he, I know what I know, I know more than I'll say;—so, (adding perhaps a crafty nod or shrug, a malicious sneer or smile,) he thinks to blast the fairest performance<sup>c</sup>.

6 He is ready to suggest ill causes and principles, latent in the heart, of practices apparently good; ascribing what is well done to bad dispo-

<sup>c</sup> Non audes repetere, qui tacondo amplius criminari? Et quia non habes quod objicias, simulas verecundiam; ut lector te putet mihi parcere, qui mentiens nec tuæ animæ pepercisti.—Hier. adv. Ruff. iii. [Opp. Tom. iv. p. ii. col. 457.]

sition, or bad purpose: so to say of a liberal man, that he is so from an ambitious temper, or out of a vain-glorious design; of a religious man, that his constant exercises of devotion proceed, not from a conscientious love and fear of God, or out of intention to please God and work out his salvation; but from hypocrisy, from affectation to gain the favour and good opinion of men, from design to promote worldly interests; this is the way of detraction. He doeth well, saith the detractor, it cannot be denied; but for what reason doeth he so? Is it not plainly his interest to do so? Doth he not mean to get applause or preferment thereby? *Doth Job* Job i. 9. *fear God for nought?* So said the father of detracting spirits.

7 He derogateth from good actions, by pretending to correct them, or to shew better, that might have been done in their room: it is, saith he, done in some respect well, or tolerably; but it might have been done better, with as small trouble and cost; he was overseen in choosing this way, or proceeding in this manner. Thus did Judas blame the good woman, who anointed our Lord's feet; *Why, said he, was not this ointment sold, and given* John xii. 5. *to the poor?* So did his covetous baseness prompt him to detract from that performance, of which our Saviour's goodness did pronounce, that it was a good work, which should perpetually through Matt. xxvi. 10, 13. the whole world pass for memorable.

8 A detractor not regarding the general course and constant tenor of a man's conversation, which is conspicuously and clearly good, will attack some part of it, the goodness whereof is less discernible, or more subject to contest and blame; as if, in a

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body admirably handsome, one overlooking that curious harmony, that delicate complexion, those fine lineaments and goodly features, which, running through the whole, do conspire to render it a lovely spectacle, should pitch on an eye or a nose to carp at; or as if in a town, otherwhere begirt with impregnable defences, one should search for the weakest place, to form a battery against it.

9 In fine, the detractor injecteth suggestions of every thing anywise plausible or possible, that can serve to diminish the worth of a person, or value of an action, which he would discountenance; he pryeth into every nook, he bolteth every circumstance, he improveth every pretence, he allegeth any report or rumour, he useth all the tricks imaginable to that end. Such is the nature and way of detraction; in enlarging upon which I am the more sparing, because the arts and methods of detraction, being in great part common with those of slander and censure, I have otherwhile, in treating upon those offences, more fully declared them.

Now, for dissuading from its practice, I shall propound to your consideration the causes, whence it proceedeth, the irregularities and pravities which it involveth, the effects which it produceth; the which will appear so base and ugly, that whoever shall consider them cannot, I suppose, but loathe the daughter of such parents, the subject of such qualities, and the mother of such children.

I. The causes of detraction are,

1 Ill nature, and bad humour: as good nature and ingenuous disposition incline men to observe, like, and commend what appeareth best in our neighbour; so malignity of temper and heart

prompteth to espy and catch at the worst: one, as a bee, gathereth honey out of any herb; the other, as a spider, sucketh poison out of the sweetest flower. SERM.  
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2 Pride, ambition, and inordinate self-love: the detractor would engross praise, and derive all glory to himself<sup>d</sup>; he would be the chief, the only excellent person; therefore he would justle another's worth out of the way, that it may not endanger standing in competition with his, or lessening it by a partnership; that it may not outshine his reputation, or dim it by the lustre thereof.

3 Envy: a detractor liketh not to see another thrive and flourish in the good esteem of men, therefore he would gladly blast his worth and virtue; his eye is evil and sore, therefore would he quench, or cloud the light that dazzleth it. Matt. xx.  
15.

4 Malicious revenge and spite: his neighbour's good practice condemneth his bad life; his neighbour's worth disparageth his unworthiness; this he conceiveth highly prejudicial to him; hence in revenge, he will labour to vilify the worth and good works of his neighbour.

5 Sense of weakness, want of courage, or despondency of his own ability<sup>e</sup>: he that, in any kind, deemeth himself able, or confideth in his own strength and industry, will allow to others the commendation beseeeming their ability; for he thinketh himself in capacity to deserve the same,

<sup>d</sup> Expedit enim vobis neminem videri bonum: quasi aliena virtus exprobratio delictorum vestrorum sit.—Sen. de Vit. B. xix. [2.]

<sup>e</sup> Οἱ εὐτελεῖς καὶ ἀφ' ἐαυτῶν μὴ δυνάμενοι φαίνεσθαι, ἐκ τοῦ ψέγειν τοὺς ἐαυτῶν κρείττονας, δείκνυσθαι βούλονται.—Socr. Hist. Eccl. vi. 13. [Tom. ii. p. 328.]

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and, as he would not lose the fruits of his own deserts, so he taketh it for equitable, that another should enjoy them; to deprive another of them he seeth were, in consequence, to prejudice his own capacity and hope: but he, that feeleth himself destitute of worth, and despaireth to arrive to the credit of others, is thence tempted to disparage and defame such persons: this course he taketh as the best allay of his contemptibleness, the only solace for his defects that he can hope for; being he cannot arise to another's pitch, he would bring down that other to his; he cannot directly get any praise, therefore he would indirectly find excuse, by shrouding his unworthiness under the blame of others. Hence detraction is a sign of the weakest and basest spirit; it is an impotent and grovelling serpent, that lurketh in the hedge, waiting opportunity to bite the heel of any nobler creature that passeth by.

6 Evil conscience: a man that is conscious to himself of a solid worth and virtue, of having honest intentions, of having performed good deeds, is satisfied with the fruits of inward comfort and outward approbation, which they do yield; he therefore will scorn to seek the bettering himself, by the discredit of others; he will not, by so mean a practice, adulterate that worth, in which he feel-eth sufficient complacence; he rather doth like, that others should enjoy their due commendation, as justifying his own claim thereto; he willingly payeth it, because he may justly demand it; and because, withholding it from another, may prejudice his own right thereto: but he that is sensible of no good qualities in himself, that is conscious of no

worthy actions that he hath done, to breed a satisfaction of mind, or build a reputation upon, would please himself in making others as little better than himself as he can, would ground a kind of credit upon the ruins and rubbish of another's fame<sup>1</sup>. When he knoweth he cannot shine by his own light, he would seem less obscure by eclipsing the brightness of others, and shutting out the day from about him; conceiving that all things look alike in the dark, and that bad appeareth not bad, where no good is near.

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As also a good man liketh worth and virtue, because they resemble what he discerneth in himself; so evil men hate them, because they do not find themselves masters of them; they are like the fox, who said the grapes were sour, because he could not reach them; and that the hare was dry meat, because he could not catch her. A detractor therefore is always a bad man, and wanteth those good qualities which he would disparage.

7 Bad, selfish design: detraction is a common engine, whereby naughty men strive to compass their ends; when by fair means, by their own wit, industry, courage, worthy behaviour, they cannot promote their interests, they cannot drive on their ambitious or covetous projects, they cannot attain that preferment or that gain which they affect, then they betake themselves to this crooked and foul way of supplanting, by detracting those whom they conceit to stand in the way of their designs.

<sup>1</sup> Remedium poenae suae arbitrantur, si nemo sit sanctus: si omnibus detrahatur: si turba sit pereuntium: si multitudo peccantium.—Hier. ad Asell. [Ep. xxix. Opp. Tom. iv. p. ii. col. 67.]

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It was the first piece of wicked policy that ever was practised in the world; the Devil, by detracting from the goodness and veracity of God, (misrepresenting his intentions, and misconstruing his commands,) strove to achieve his mischievous design of seducing our forefathers; and in his footsteps, his serpentine progeny (the race of malicious, envious, ambitious, covetous, and crafty politicians) do tread. It is observed to be a fault that usually haunteth courts, wherein there is competition for the favour of a prince, and the consequences thereof, (for dignity, power, wealth, repute,) to get which to themselves, they strive to dispossess or prevent others, by this instrument of detraction. It is also rife among scholars, that is, among competitors for wit, learning, industry, and the rewards of them, reputation or preferment. From such principles and causes, usually, doth this practice spring.

II. It doth involve these kinds of irregularity and pravity.

I Injustice: a detractor careth not how he dealeth with his neighbour, what wrong he doeth him. Justice obligeth to render every man his due; *Honour to whom honour is due*, and praise to him that deserveth praise. There can be no greater injury done a man, than to spoil his best good, his virtue; than to rob him of the best reward of his pains and cares, which is a fair reputation; (I speak of rewards which lie in the reach of men.) No man prizes any thing comparably to his honesty and honour; who therefore, by any means, blurreth them, is most injurious. *Wo unto them—who take the righteousness of the righteous from him.*

Rom. xiii.  
7.

Isai. v. 23.  
Prov. xvii.  
15.

Injurious indeed he is, not only to the virtuous person, but to virtue itself; for commendation is a debt we owe to it, wherever it is found; which conduceth to its encouragement and advancement; and to wrong goodness itself is the most heinous injustice. SERM.  
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2 Uncharitableness: it is evident that the detractor doth not love his neighbour; for charity maketh the best of every thing: *Charity believeth every thing, hopeth every thing* to the advantage of its object; charity delighteth to see the beloved to prosper and flourish; and will therefore contribute its endeavour to the procuring it to do so: the detractor therefore, (who would defile the best, and display the worst in his neighbour,) can have no charity; he indeed manifesteth the greatest hatred, seeing he striveth to do the greatest mischief, to cause the greatest vexation to his neighbour, in bereaving him of his most precious and dear enjoyments. 1 Cor. xiii.

3 Impiety: he that loveth and reverenceth God, will acknowledge and approve his goodness, in bestowing excellent gifts and graces to his brethren; when such appear, he will be afraid to disavow or disgrace them, that he may not rob God himself of the glory thence due to his favour and mercy, or, through his neighbour's side, wound the divine benignity: he will be ready to bless and praise God for all such emanations of his goodness; as those did in the Gospel, who, beholding our Saviour's miraculous works of grace, did *Glorify God, who had given such gifts unto men*: but the detractor careth not for that; he feareth not to bereave God of the honour of dispensing good Matt. ix. 8.



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gifts, that his brother may not have the honour of receiving them; he will rather deny God to be good, than allow a man to be so, by his grace and blessing: so is he no less a detractor from God, than from his neighbour.

Hence, of all offences, detraction certainly must be most odious to God. He is the God of truth, and therefore detesteth lying, of which detraction ever, especially in moral esteem, hath a spice: he is the God of justice, and therefore especially doth abhor wronging the best persons and actions: he is the God of love, and therefore cannot but loathe this capital violation of charity: he is jealous of his glory, and cannot therefore endure it to be abused, by slurring his good gifts and graces; he cannot but hate that offence, which approacheth to that most heinous and unpardonable sin, that consisteth in defaming the excellent works performed by divine power and goodness, ascribing them to bad causes.

Matt. xii.  
24.

4 Detraction involveth degenerous baseness, meanness of spirit, and want of good manners. All men affect to seem generous, and will say they scorn to be base; but generosity is in nothing more seen, than in a candid estimation of other men's virtues and good qualities: to this, generosity of nature, generosity of education, generosity of principles and judgment, do all conspiringly dispose: it is the noblest kind of courtesy, to tender and further the reputation of others; to be liberal in bestowing commendation on deserving persons; it obligeth men more than any other benefit can do, procuring them commonly real advantage, always cheering and satisfying their mind; for in nothing

more do they please themselves, than in reaping this fruit of their good intention and honest industry, the approbation of worthy men; it is therefore a most genteel thing thus to oblige men. But, on the other side, nothing more plainly argueth a degenerate and ignoble heart, ill breeding and ill-formed manners, a sorry mind and poor judgment, than to disesteem or disparage worth and virtue in others: it is the most savage rudeness, the most sordid illiberality, the most ugly clownishness that can be; of all men, therefore, it most doth misbecome those, who pretend to be gentlemen.

5 In consequence to these things, detraction includeth folly; for every unjust, every uncharitable, every impious, every base person is, as such, a fool: none of those qualities are consistent with wisdom; but the folly of it will particularly appear, together with its pravity, by the bad and hurtful effects which it produceth, both in regard to others, and to him that practiseth it; some of which are these:

III. 1 The practice thereof is a great discouragement and obstruction to the common practice of goodness: for many, seeing the best men thus disparaged, and the best actions vilified, are disheartened and deterred from practising virtue, especially in a conspicuous and eminent degree. Why, will many a man say, shall I be strictly good, seeing goodness is so liable to be misused, seeing thereby I shall provoke the detracting tongue, seeing my reward shall be to have a severe inquisition pass upon me, to have my life defaced, and my name bespattered? Had not I better be contented with a mediocrity and obscurity of good-

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ness, than by a glaring lustre thereof to draw the envious eye, and kindle raging obloquy upon me? Thus men of a weaker spirit, or a bashful temper, (who are not stiff and resolute in their way, who have not the heart or the face to bear up against rude assaults of their reputation,) will be scared and daunted by detraction; so as consequently to be induced,

*Invidiam placare——virtute relicta*<sup>s</sup>.

And when thus the credit of virtue is blasted in its practisers, many will be diverted from it; so will it grow out of request, and the world will be corrupted by these agents of the evil one.

It were indeed, upon this consideration, advisable and just, not to seem ever to detract; even not then, when we are well assured, that, by speaking ill, we shall not really do it; if we should discover any man to seem worthy, or to be so reputed, whom yet we discern, by standing in a nearer light, not to be truly such, having had opportunity to know his bad qualities, bad purposes, or bad deeds; yet wisdom would commonly dictate, and goodness dispose, not to mar his repute. If we should observe, without danger of mistake, any plausible action to be performed out of bad inclinations, principles, or designs; yet ordinarily, in discretion and honesty, we should let it pass with such commendation, as its appearance may procure, rather than to slur it, by venting our disadvantageous apprehensions about it: for it is no great harm that any man should enjoy undeserved commendation, or that a counterfeit worth should find a dissembled respect; it is but being over-just,

<sup>s</sup> Hor. [Sat. ii. 3. 13.]

which, if it be ever a fault, can hardly be so in this case, wherein we do not expend any cost, or suffer any damage: but it may do mischief to blemish an appearance of virtue; it may be a wrong thereto to deface its very image; the very disclosing hypocrisy doth inflict a wound on goodness, and exposeth it to scandal; for bad men thence will be prone to infer, that all virtue proceedeth from the like bad principles: so the disgrace, cast on that which is spurious, will redound to the prejudice of that which is most genuine: and if it be good to forbear detracting from that which is certainly false, much more is it so, in regard to that which is possibly true; and far more still is it so, in respect to that which is clear and sure.

2 Hence detraction is very noxious and baneful to all society; for all society is maintained in welfare by encouragement of honesty and industry; the which, when disparagement is cast upon them, will be in danger to languish and decay: whence a detractor is the worst member that can be of a society; he is a very moth, a very canker therein.

3 Detraction worketh real damage and mischief to our neighbour; it bereaveth him of that goodly reputation. which is the proper reward of virtue, and a main support to the practice of it; it often really obstructeth and disappointeth his undertakings, estranging those from him, or setting them against him, who do credulously entertain it.

4 The detractor abuseth those, into whose ears he instilleth his poisonous suggestions, engaging them to partake in the injuries done to worth and virtue; causing them to entertain unjust and un-

SERM. charitable conceits, to practise unseemly and un-  
XXI. worthy behaviour toward good men.

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5 The detractor produceth great inconveniences and mischiefs to himself.

He raiseth against himself fierce animosity and wrath: for men that are conscious to themselves of their own honest meaning and blameless proceedings, cannot endure to be abused by unjust disparagement; hence are they stirred to boil with passion, and to discharge revenge upon the detractor.

He exposeth himself to general hatred: all good men loathe him as a base and mischievous person, and a particular enemy of theirs, always ready to wrong them; every man is apt to say, he, that doth thus abuse another, will be ready to serve me in like manner, if I chance to come in his way, vilifying the best thing I can do: even the worst men will dislike him; for even such affect to do somewhat laudable or plausible, and would be glad to enjoy approbation for it; and cannot therefore brook those who lie in wait to rob them of the fruit of their good endeavours: so do all men worthily detest and shun the detractor, as a common enemy to goodness first, and then unto men. Further,

6 The detractor yieldeth occasion to others, and a kind of right to return the same measure upon him. If he hath in him a show of any thing laudable, men will not allow him any commendation from it; for why, conceive they, shall he receive that which he will not suffer others to enjoy? How can any man admit him to have any real worth or virtue in himself, who doth not like it

or treat it well in another? Hence, if a detractor hath any good in him, he much injureth himself, depriving himself of all the respect belonging thereto. SERM.  
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7 Again, the detractor, esteeming things according to moral possibility, will assuredly be defeated in his aims; his detraction in the close will avail nothing, but to bring trouble and shame upon himself; for God hath a particular care over innocence and goodness, so as not to let them finally to suffer: *The good man's righteousness he will bring forth as the light, and his judgment as the noon day.* Ps. xxxvii.  
6. Wise men easily will discern the foul play, and will scorn it; good men ever will be ready to clear and vindicate the truth: worth, however clouded for a time, will break through all mists, and gloriously expand itself, to the confusion of its most sly opposers.

Such are the natural and obvious effects of this practice; the consideration whereof (together with the causes producing it, and the essential adjuncts which it did involve) will, I should think, suffice to deter us from it.

I shall only adjoin one consideration, which our text suggesteth: *Speak not evil of one another, brethren,* saith the apostle: brethren; that appellation doth imply a strong argument enforcing the precept; brethren, with especial tenderness of affection, should love one another, and delight in each other's good; they should tender the interest and honour of each other as their own; they should therefore by all means cherish and countenance virtue in one another, as that which promoteth the common welfare, which adorneth and illustrateth

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Rom. xii.  
5.

the dignity of their family. We should rejoice in the good qualities and worthy deeds of any Christian, as glorifying our common Father, as gracing our common profession, as edifying the common body, whereof we are members. *Members we are one of another*, and as such should find complacence in the health and vigour of any part, from whence the whole doth receive benefit and comfort: for one brother to repine at the welfare, to malign the prosperity, to decry the merit, to destroy the reputation of another, is very unnatural; for one Christian anywise to wrong or prejudice another, is highly impious.

James i.  
17.

To conclude: it is our duty, (which equity, which ingenuity, which charity, which piety do all concurrently oblige us to,) whenever we do see any good person or worthy deed, to yield hearty esteem, to pay due respect, gladly to congratulate the person, and willingly to commend the work; rendering withal, thanks and praise for them to the donor of all good gifts: unto whom, for all the good things bestowed upon us, and upon all his creatures, be for ever all glory and praise. *Amen.*

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## SERMON XXII.

AGAINST RASH CENSURING AND JUDGING.

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MATTH. VII. 1.

*Judge not.*

THESE words, being part of our Saviour's most SERM.  
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divine Sermon upon the Mount, contain a very short precept, but of vast use and consequence; the observance whereof would much conduce to the good of the world, and to the private quiet of each man; it interdicting a practice, which commonly produceth very mischievous and troublesome effects; a practice never rare among men, but now very rife; when, with the general causes, which ever did and ever will, in some measure, dispose men thereto, some special ones do concur, that powerfully incline to it.

There are innate to men an unjust pride, emboldening them to take upon them beyond what belongeth to them, or doth become them; an excessive self-love, prompting them, as to flatter themselves in their own conceit, so to undervalue others, and from vilifying their neighbours, to seek commendation to themselves; an envious malignity, which ever lusteth to be pampered with finding or making faults; many corrupt affections, springing from fleshly nature, which draw or drive men to this practice; so that, in all ages, it hath



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been very common, and never any profession hath been so much invaded, as that of the judge.

But divers peculiar causes have such an influence upon our age, as more strongly to sway men thereto: there is a wonderful affectation to seem hugely wise and witty: and how can we seem such, more than in putting on the garb and countenance of judges; scanning and passing sentence upon all persons, and all things incident? There is an extreme niceness and delicacy of conceit, which maketh us apt to relish few things, and to distaste any thing; there are dissensions in opinion, and addictedness to parties, which do tempt us, and seem to authorize us, in condemning all that differ from us; there is a deep corruption of mind and manners, which engageth men, in their own defence, to censure others, diverting the blame from home, and shrouding their own under the covert of other men's faults<sup>a</sup>; there are new principles of morality and policy become current with great vogue, which allow to do or say any thing subservient to our interests or designs; which also do represent all men so bad, that, admitting them true, nothing hardly can be said ill of any man, beyond truth and justice.

Hence is the world become so extremely critical and censorious, that in many places the chief employment of men, and the main body of conversation is, if we mark it, taken up in judging<sup>b</sup>: every gos-

<sup>a</sup> Expedit enim vobis neminem videri bonum: quasi aliena virtus exprobratio delictorum vestrorum sit.—Sen. de Vit. B. XIX. [2.]

<sup>b</sup> Εἰς τὸ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων πολυπραγμονεῖν καὶ καταδικάζειν δαπανᾶται ἡμῖν ἅπας ὁ βίος· καὶ οὐδένα ἂν εὖροις ταχέως, οὐ βιωτικὸν ἄνδρα, οὐ μοναχὸν ταύτης ἐλεύθερον τῆς ἁμαρτίας, καίτοιγε τοσαύτης

sipping is, as it were, a court of justice; every seat becometh a tribunal; at every table standeth a bar, whereto all men are cited, whereat every man, as it happeneth, is arraigned and sentenced: no sublimity or sacredness of dignity, no integrity or innocence of life, no prudence or circumspection of demeanour can exempt any person from it: not one escapeth being taxed under some scandalous name, or odious character, one or other. Not only the outward actions and visible practices of men are judged; but their retired sentiments are brought under trial, their inward dispositions have a verdict passed on them, their final states are determined. Whole bodies of men are thus judged at once, and nothing it is in one breath to damn whole Churches, at one push to throw down whole Nations into the bottomless pit. All mankind in a lump is severely censured, as void of any real goodness or true virtue; so fatally depraved, as not to be corrigible by any good discipline, not to be recoverable even by the grace of God: yea God himself is hardly spared, his providence coming under the bold obloquy of those, who, as the Psalmist speaketh of some in his time, whose race doth yet survive, *Speak loftily, and set their mouth against the heavens.*

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Ps. lxxiii.  
8, 9.

This being too apparently the present state of things, and obvious practice of men, it were desirable that, in order to their being reclaimed, men commonly did well understand the nature of this practice, with the heinous guilt, and consequently the deadly hazard, they do incur thereby: at this

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purpose my discourse shall aim, wherein I shall endeavour both to describe the nature of the practice forbidden in my text, and to declare the pravity, iniquity, and folly of it.

*Judge not.* As to the word we may observe, that it, being in itself, according to its primitive sense, of a middle and indifferent signification, is yet frequently in the scripture used in the worst sense; so as to import those acts, or those effects of judgment, which pass to the disadvantage of the persons subjected thereto; for condemnation, and for infliction of punishment: and this sense, here, surely the word doth principally respect, yet not so precisely, as to exclude somewhat contained in the larger sense: we are so prohibited the condemning and punishing our neighbour in his good name, that withal some acts antecedent, or concomitant to those, are glanced at in the prohibition: undue application thereto, unjust proceeding therein, are also signified unlawful; for the meaning of the word and the reason of the case may be so far extended.

But, for the fuller and clearer understanding of the matter, we must observe, that there are divers sorts of judging, or acts resembling judgment, which do not belong to this precept; which it is requisite to distinguish from this judging prohibited.

1 That exercising public judgment or administering justice is not here prohibited, I need not to insist, that is necessary; human society could not subsist, right could not be maintained, nor peace preserved without it; God thereby governeth the world, earthly judges being his instruments and substitutes; such judgment is not so much the act

of men, as of God himself, by whose authority, in whose name, for whose service it is ministered. SERM. XXII.

As Moses told the judges in his time, *You shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's.* Deut. i. 17. And in numberless places of scripture this judgment is allowed and authorized; it therefore is not touched here.

2 That trial and censure, although out of court, and without formal process, which any kind of superiors do exercise upon their inferiors, committed to their inspection and care; such as of parents over children, masters over servants, pastors over their flock, any governors over their charge, their admonitions, reprehensions, and corrections are to be excepted hence, as being in themselves needful and warranted, yea enjoined by God.

3 Neither are fraternal correption or friendly reproof, proceeding out of charitable design, upon clear ground, in fit season, within reasonable compass, concerned in this prohibition; this being a wholesome practice, and a duty incumbent on us: *Thou shalt, saith the Law, not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.* Lev. xix. 17. 1 Thess. v. 14.

4 All observing and reflecting upon our neighbour's actions, all framing an opinion about them, and expressing our minds concerning them, are not forbidden. For we are not bound perpetually to shut our eyes, or go about hood-winked; nor to stop our ears and make ourselves deaf: and how can we forbear to think according to plain evidence? how can we resist the impressions of sense upon our minds? how can we contest notorious

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experience? how also, barring such apprehensions of obvious and apparent things, could we bear testimony concerning them? how could we signify our approbation or dislike of them? how could we, for his amendment, admonish or reprove our neighbour, as in some cases we are obliged to do?

5 We are not hence obliged to think so well of all men, as, without competent knowledge, always to rely upon their pretences, or to intrust our interests in their hands; for common experience acquainteth us, that we may be deceived in trusting men, prudence biddeth us, in matters of importance, not to confide in uncertainties; wherefore we shall not be culpable for being wary in such cases: this indeed is not a positive judgment, but only a waving to declare in favour, when sufficient ground of doing so doth not appear; it is only a reasonable suspecting the possibility of miscarriage in some persons, not a downright asserting ill concerning any one man: wherefore to do it, as it suiteth discretion, so it doth not thwart justice or charity; and cannot therefore be prohibited here.

6 We are also not hence obliged, in contradiction to plain sense, to judge well of men; accounting him for a saint, or a good man, whom we see living disorderly, or committing scandalous offences, plainly repugnant to the rules of piety, justice, or sobriety.

In fine, there are some special cases and circumstances, wherein good men excusably may, in severe terms, declare their resentment of manifest wickedness, especially such as is prejudicial to God's honour and public good. Of this there are divers instances, which yet hardly can be reduced

to common rules, or proposed for general example; the matter being ticklish, and men being apt to pervert any liberty or pretence of this kind, by indulging to their own bad humours and passions. SERM.  
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These sorts of allowable judgments being excepted, it is then private, affected, needless, groundless, rash, and harsh censuring the persons or actions of our brethren; such as doth resemble, not the acting of a lawful superior, of a needful witness, of a faithful friend, but of a judge acting without competent right, upon no good grounds, or in undue manner, which is here interdicted: the word judging doth well imply the nature of this fault, the manner of our proceeding therein, the grounds of its unlawfulness; neither perhaps can we better understand our duty in this matter, than by expending what are the properties and obligations of a judge, and comparing our practice thereto; for thence it may plainly appear, how unqualified we are to bear this office, and how unduly we execute it.

1 No judge should intrude himself into the office, or assume a judicial power, without competent authority; that is, by delegation from superior powers, or by voluntary reference of the parties concerned. This condition we fail in, whenever, without warrant from God, or special reason exacting it from us, we do pry into, scan, and tax the actions of our neighbour. When, I say, we are pragmatically inquisitive into the purposes and proceedings of our superiors, of our equals, of those who are not subject to our charge and care, when we narrowly examine them, when we peremptorily blame them, then do we unduly exalt ourselves

1 Pet. iv.  
15.  
1 Thess. iv.  
11.  
1 Tim. v.  
13.

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above them, and exercise an unwarrantable jurisdiction over them. What sense doth offer, we may receive in; what judgment reason doth extort, we may follow; what testimony public benefit requireth, we may yield; what expression charity doth call for toward our neighbour's edification, we may seasonably vent: but if we proceed further in this way, the party concerned may appeal from us, as incompetent and unlawful judges of his actions or his state; we are arrogant and injurious in presuming to exercise that office. God is the master and judge of men<sup>c</sup>, and without authority from him, we must not presume to judge his servants and subjects: so we are taught by St Paul, *Who, saith he, art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth:* and St James in like manner, upon the same ground, expostulateth with the censurer; *There is, saith he, one Lawgiver, who is able to save, or to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?* Our Lord himself for this reason declined intermeddling in the affairs of men; *Who, said he, made me a judge or divider over you?* And shall we constitute ourselves in the office, shall we seat ourselves on the tribunal, without any commission from God or call from men? How many judges, if this proviso were observed, would have their quietus! how many censurers would be voided hence!

**Lev. xix.** 2 A judge should be free from all prejudices  
**15.**  
**James ii.** and all partial affections; especially from those  
**1.**  
**Matt. xxii.** which are disadvantageous to the party in danger  
**16.**  
**1 Tim. v.** to suffer; such as tempt or incline to condemn  
**21.**

<sup>c</sup> Quid in potestatem alienam irruis? quid temerarius Dei tribunal ascendis?—Optat. Lib. ii. [cap. 25. p. 46.]

him; from ill-opinion and ill-will, from anger, envy, revengefulness, contempt, and the like: for SERM.  
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he that is possessed with these is nowise qualified to be a judge; his eyes are blinded, or distorted, or infected with bad tinctures, so that he cannot discern what is right, or that he seeth things represented in the wrong place, and under false colours; his mind is discomposed and disturbed, so that he cannot calmly and steadily apprehend or consider the just state of the case; his will is biassed, and strongly propendeth one way, so that he cannot proceed uprightly in a straight and even course: being not indifferently affected, but concerned on one side, he is become a party, or an adversary, and thence unfit to be a judge; he hath determined the cause with himself beforehand, so that no place is left to further discussion or defence; wherefore before such a judge the best cause will fall, the clearest innocence shall not preserve from condemnation. He therefore that will undertake this office must first divest himself of all prejudices, must rid himself of all passions, must purify himself from all corrupt inclinations, taking care not to come with a condemning mind, or a lust to punish the obnoxious party; otherwise a just exception lieth against him, and reasonably his jurisdiction may be declined.

If this rule were put in practice, there would be little censuring; for few come to it with a free and pure mind; few blame their neighbours without some preoccupation of judgment, or some disaffection toward them.

3 A judge should never proceed in judgment, without careful examination of the cause, so as *Deut. i. 16.*



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well to understand it. Even those, who out of indispensable duty, or by a just power, may call others to account, are yet obliged to be wary, and never to pass sentence without due cognizance of the cause; otherwise they will judge blindly and rashly; they will either decide wrongly, or so truly, that doing it must be imputed, not to their virtue, but to their fortune; often they will be mistaken, and it is luck that they are not so always: and what plainer iniquity can there be, than that the reputation or real interest of any man should be put to the arbitrement of chance; that he should be defamed, or damnified, not for a certain fault, but from an unhappy lot? As things viewed at a distance appear much different in bigness, shape, and colour, from what they are in nature and reality; so if we do not look nearly and narrowly, we shall greatly misapprehend the nature, the degrees, the right characters of things and of persons: then be our pretence to judge never so fair, yet our proceeding is unjust; then if we do unduly invade the place, it will be a great aggravation of our misdemeanour: if, of our own head and pleasure, we will constitute ourselves judges, yet at least we should act the judge's part, in patiently attending to, and heedfully sifting the cause: if we have not a stomach to hear, if we will not afford the care to mind what may be alleged in favour of the party concerned; if we cannot or will not scan every point and circumstance, which may serve to acquit him, or to excuse and extenuate his guilt, why do we undertake to be his judges? why do we engage ourselves into the commission of so palpable injustice; yea, of so disgraceful folly? for,

He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is, saith the Wise Man, a folly and shame unto him. This caution excludeth the rash judgment, from which if men would abstain, there would be little censuring: for nothing is more ordinary, than for men to do like those of whom St Jude saith, Ὅσα μὲν οὐκ οἶδασι βλασφημοῦσι, *They rail at what they know not*; they censure persons with whom they are not thoroughly acquainted; they condemn actions whereof they do not clearly ken the reasons; they little weigh the causes and circumstances which urge or force men to do things; they stand at great distance, and yet, with great assurance and peremptoriness, determine how things are, as if they did see through them, and knew them most exactly.

4 A judge should never pronounce final sentence, but *Ex allegatis et probatis*, upon good grounds, after certain proof, and upon full conviction. Not any slight conjecture, or thin surmise; any idle report, or weak pretence, is sufficient to ground a condemnation upon; the case should be irrefragably clear and sure, before we determine on the worst side<sup>d</sup>: *Judge not*, saith our Lord, *according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment*. The Jews, seeing our Lord cure an infirm person upon the Sabbath-day, presently upon that semblance condemned him of violating the Law; not considering either the sense of the Law, or the nature of his performance; and this he termeth unrighteous judgment. Every accusation should be deemed null, until, both as to matter of fact,

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Prov. xviii.  
13.

Jude 10.

John vii.  
24.

<sup>d</sup> Μὴ πρότερον τὰς ψήφους ἐκφέρειν, πρὶν ἂν ἐναργεῖς ἀποδείξεις γένηνται.—Chrys. in Gen. Hom. xlii. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 342.]

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and in point of right, it be firmly proved true<sup>e</sup>: it sufficeth not to presume it may be so; to say, it seemeth thus, doth not sound like the voice of a judge; otherwise, seeing there never is wanting some colour of accusation, every action being liable to some suspicion, or sinister construction, no innocence could be secure, no person could escape condemnation; the reputation and interest of all men living would continually stand exposed to inevitable danger. It is a rule of equity and humanity, built upon plain reason, that rather a nocent person should be permitted to escape, than an innocent should be constrained to suffer: for the impunity of the one is but an inconvenience, the suffering of the other is a wrong; the punishment of the guilty yieldeth only a remote probable benefit; the affliction of the blameless involveth a near certain mischief: wherefore it is more prudent and more righteous to absolve a man, of whose guilt there are probable arguments, than to condemn any man upon bare suspicions. And remarkable it is, how God, in the Law, did prescribe the manner of trial and judgment, even in the highest case, and most nearly touching himself, that of idolatry; *If, saith the Law, it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and inquired diligently, and behold it be true, and the thing certain, that such an abomination is wrought in Israel; then shalt thou bring forth that man, or that woman,——and shalt stone them.* See what great caution is prescribed, what pregnant

Deut. xvii.  
4, 5.

\* Quod probari non potest, mihi infectum est.—Bern.

De occultis cordis alieni temere judicare iniquum est, et cum cujus non videntur opera nisi bona, peccatum est ex suspitione reprehendere.—Joh. iii. 1. Ep. 1. [?]

evidence is required in such cases: it is not enough that it be reported, or come to our ear; diligent inquiry must be made, it must be found true, it must appear certain, before we may proceed to condemn, or execute; it is indeed not fair judgment, but mere calumny, to condemn a man before he doth, by sufficient proof, appear guilty.

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If this rule were regarded, how many censures would be prevented! For do not men catch at any shadow of a fault? Are they not ready upon the least presumption to condemn their neighbour? Doth not any, even the weakest and vainest testimony, any wandering hearsay, or vulgar rumour, serve to ground the most heavy sentences?

5 From hence is plainly consequent, that there are divers causes wholly exempted from our judgment, and which, in no case, we must pretend to meddle with; such as are the secret thoughts, affections, and purposes of men, not expressed by plain words, nor declared by overt acts; for a capacity of judging doth ever suppose a power of cognizance; and, it being impossible for us to reach the knowledge of those things, we cannot therefore pretend to judge of them. As it is the property of God to search the hearts and try the reins, so it is his prerogative to judge concerning the secret notions in them; the which we attempting to do, no less vainly and foolishly, than presumptuously and profanely do encroach upon.

This point also being regarded, would prevent innumerable rash judgments; for men, commonly, do no less dive into the thoughts, and reprehend the inward dispositions and designs of their neighbour, than they do his most apparent and avowed

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actions; it is almost as ordinary to blame men for the invisible workings of their mind, as for their most visible deportment in conversation.

6 Hence also it is not commonly allowable to judge concerning the state, either present or final, of our neighbour in regard to God; so as to take him for a wicked man, or to denounce reprobation upon him<sup>1</sup>: for the state of men is not so much determined by single actions, as by a body of practice, or by a long course and tenor of life, compounded and complicated of actions in number and kind unconceivably various: it dependeth not only upon external visible behaviour, but upon the practice of close retirements, and occult motions of soul; upon the results of natural temper, upon the influence of fortuitous circumstances; upon many things indiscernible, inscrutable, and unaccountable

Ps. cxxxix.  
6.

1 Sam. xvi.

7.  
Isai. xi. 3.

Ps. cxxxix.  
2, 3.

Prov. xvi.  
2.

1 Sam. ii.

3.  
Ps. ciii. 14.  
Job xiv. 16.

to us; the which God alone can perceive and estimate throughly: *God seeth not, as he did himself tell Samuel, as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart: He searcheth our hearts, and understandeth our thoughts afar off: He compasseth our path, and is acquainted with all our ways: He weigheth our spirits; He knoweth our frame; He numbereth our steps; he scanneth our designs, and poiseth all our circumstances exactly; he doth penetrate and consider many things transcending our reach, upon which the true worth of persons and real merit of actions do depend: he therefore only can well judge of men's state. As a specious outside doth often cover inward hollowness and foulness, so,*

<sup>1</sup> Πολλὰ δεῖ στραφῆναι, καὶ παθεῖν, πρὶν ἄλλου καταγνώσαι δυσ-  
σίβειαν.—Greg. Naz. [Or. xxxii. Opp. Tom. i. p. 599 c.]

under an unpromising appearance, much solidity and sincerity of goodness may lodge; a dirty ground doth often contain good seeds within it: our judgment therefore in such cases is likely, at least in degree, to be fallacious and unjust; and therefore it is fit to supersede it, according to the advice and discourse of St Paul; *He that judgeth me is the Lord; therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come; who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall every man have praise* (that is, a right estimate of his person and deeds) *from God.*

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1 Cor. iv. 5.

If this were duly considered, many hard thoughts and many harsh words would be spared; men would not be so apt to damn those whom they have no skill to try.

7 Further: a judge should not undertake to proceed against any man, without warning and citing him to appear, or without affording him competent liberty and opportunity to defend and justify himself. Judgment should not be administered clancularly, in dark corners, but in open court: not suspiciously, in a muttering or whispering way; but frankly, with a clear and audible voice; not upon surprise, but with allowance of leisure and advice, that the party may be able to apprehend his case, and manage his plea for his best defence: for it may justly be presumed, that, as he is most concerned, so he is best acquainted with his own proceedings, and may allege reasons for them, which no man can so well perceive as himself; it is therefore fit, that he should be heard before he is condemned, that he may not

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Acts xxv.  
16.

suffer wrong; at least, that he may be convinced that he doth not, and that our proceeding may be cleared from misprision; that also the world may be satisfied of justice being done; and that likewise false accusers may be liable to due shame and chastisement. The manner of proceeding used by the Romans, and reported by Festus in St Paul's case, was full of reason and equity: *It is not, said that governor, the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself, concerning the crime laid against him.* Otherwise indeed, any innocence may easily be oppressed irrecoverably, without any defence, and consequently without any means of evasion or redress. We should never yield both ears to the accuser, but reserve one for the accused<sup>s</sup>. The end of justice, we may consider, is not to condemn, nor to work mischief to any one, but rather, so far as may be, to acquit, and prevent evil to all; at least it aimeth to clear the truth, and state the case indifferently; wherefore it is just, that all advantage that well can be, should be afforded to the obnoxious party for his justification and deliverance; at least, that he be not denied equal advantage with his prosecutors; humanity would allow him some favour; the most rigorous

<sup>s</sup> Χρὴ τοὺς ἐννόμως δικάζοντας τῷ κατηγορουμένῳ θατέραν ταῖν ἀκοαῖν ἀκεραίαν φυλάξαι, &c.—Theodor. Ep. xci. [Opp. Tom. iii. p. 967 c.]

God himself, as some of the Fathers observe, hath shewed us an example of this equity, *Descendam igitur et videbo*, &c. Gen. xviii. 21.

Καί τοι σαφῶς ἤδει τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκείνων τὴν πονηρίαν. ἀλλ' ὁμῶς ἔφη καταβάς ὄψομαι, διδάσκων ἡμᾶς ἀναμένειν τῶν πραγμάτων τὴν πείραν.—Id. Ep. cxix. [Tom. iii. p. 992 c.] P. Pelagius ad Eliam.

justice cannot refuse him leave to contest his cause upon equal terms: wherefore it is fit that he should be acquainted with his case, that competent time and means should be afforded him to prepare for his defence, that his plea should receive, if not a favourable, yet a free audience: the contrary practice is indeed rather backbiting, whispering, supplanting, or sycophantry, than fair and lawful judging.

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The observation of this rule would also cut off many censures; for seldom it is that our censurers do charge men to their faces, but rather take all possible care, that what they say may never come to the ears of those whom they accuse; they fear nothing more than being confronted and detected; they decline the shame and the requital due to their sycophantic practice; which is a manifest argument of their foul dealing; and they no less in reality do thence condemn themselves than they would seem to condemn others.

8 Moreover, a judge is obliged to conform all his determinations to the settled rules of judgment, so as never to condemn any man for acting that which is enjoined, or approved, or permitted by them; he must not pronounce according to his private fancy, or particular affection, but according to the standing laws: which, as they are the only certain rules of moral action, the only grounds of obligation, the only standards of guilt and innocence; so, in reason, they should be the sole measures of judging: he that proceedeth otherwise is an arbitrary and a slippery judge; he encroacheth upon the right and liberty of those with whom he meddleth, pronouncing them guilty, whom God



SERM. XXII. and reason do proclaim blameless. This is that which St Paul doth reprove in the 14th to the 1 Cor. viii. 8. Romans, and elsewhere. The case was this: Col. ii. 16. some were of opinion, that abstaining from some kinds of meat, and observing some festival times, were matters of duty required by God; others thought it free to eat any thing, and to use any times alike: these, according to such their private opinions, did censure the practices of each other; one party condemned the other as transgressing duty, the other contemned them as weak in judgment: but the apostle reproveth both as irregular in their behaviour, in taxing one another for matters, which, on both hands, were indifferent; the divine Law having clearly neither enjoined those observances, nor prohibited them; so that each man had a liberty to do, or to abstain, as he thought good, or most agreeable to his duty, and conducive to his salvation. So is it culpable in us, to blame any man for doing that which is not repugnant to God's express command, or to the plain dictates of reason.

The observing this condition would smother many censures: for do we not commonly reprehend our neighbours for practices wholly blameless, perhaps commendable? Do we not sometimes grievously reproach them for not complying with our desires, for not serving our interests, for not jumping with our humours, for not dancing after our pipe; for dissenting from us in any conceit, although dubious or false; for discoasting from our practice, although bad or inconvenient? Say we not ordinarily, he is morose, peevish, singular, 1 Pet. iv. 4. rude, because he would not run with us into the

same excess of riot; he is weak, nice, superstitious, because he constantly and strictly adhereth to his duty; he is negligent, loose, profane, because he useth his liberty in some matters indifferent? Bar such matters of obloquy, into how narrow a compass would it be restrained!

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9 Hence further, it is to be supposed, that a judge should be a person of good knowledge and ability; well versed and skilful in the laws concerning matters under debate; endued with good measure of reason, enabling him, as to sift and canvass matters of fact, so to compare them accurately with the rules of right: for nothing is more absurd than an ignorant and unskilful judge<sup>b</sup>. Men therefore of weak capacity, of mean education, of small experience, are qualified to judge in few cases, most things being placed above their reach; such never should presume to censure actions, the worth or moral quality whereof depend upon the stating and resolution of abstruse, intricate, or subtle questions. It is not therefore for mechanics or rustics, to judge about difficulties of science, about controversies in religion, about mysteries of policy, or reasons of state; or to censure those who deal in them: in so doing they hugely trespass beyond their calling and sphere; they do strangely misbecome the bench, and will very untowardly misbehave themselves thereon; the decision of such matters is to be reserved to those, who, by study and experience, have attained peculiar faculties to do it respectively.

Observing this point would draw many down

<sup>b</sup> Ἐκαστος δὲ κρίνει καλῶς ἃ γινώσκει, καὶ τούτων ἐστὶν ἀγαθὸς κριτής.—Arist. Eth. [I. 3, 5.]

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from their usurped seats of judicature, and stop numberless vain sentences; we should have very few judges left, if all men would be so modest and so wise as not to meddle beyond their skill and ability.

10 Again: it is proper for a judge not to make himself an accuser; not to seek for misdemeanours, not to draw more causes under his cognizance than are in course presented before him: he should rather judge as out of constraint, than of choice; rather as sorry to find a necessity, than glad to snatch an occasion of condemning offenders<sup>1</sup>. So should we rather decline than seek the office of censuring our brethren, rather conniving at and concealing their faults, than being forward to expose them; absolute reason only should induce, or indispensable necessity force us thereto.

This also greatly would diminish the trade of censuring; for, if we should never censure without great reason or necessity, how seldom should we do it! Do we not rather affect to do it causelessly and needlessly? Do we not eagerly search after and greedily embrace all occasions to do it? Is it not a pleasant entertainment to us, to be carping and cavilling at any body we meet, at any thing we see done?

11 Further: he that pretendeth to judge others should himself be innocent; under no indictment, and not liable to condemnation. Is it not very improper for a criminal, for one who is, not only in truth and in his own conscience guilty, but who standeth actually convicted of heinous offences, to

<sup>1</sup> Nam sine dubio in omnibus statim accusationibus hoc agendum est, ne ad eas libenter descendisse videamur.—Quint. XI. 1. [57.]

sit upon the bench, determining about the deeds and the states of others<sup>k</sup>? It is the case of us all, we are all notoriously guilty of heinous crimes before God, we all do lie under the sentence of his law; we do all stand in need of pardon from our Judge, his mercy is our only hope and refuge: and shall we then pretend to be judges, or be passing sentence on our brethren? If only those who are free and guiltless should judge, who could undertake it? There would surely be no more than there appeared then, when in the case of the woman taken in adultery our Lord propounded the like condition; 'Ο ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν, *He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her:* upon which proposition the sequel was; *And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even to the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst;* so infallibly should no man be allowed to judge, who were not himself void of like guilt, would every man escape censure.

12 Lastly: it is the property of a good judge to proceed with great moderation, equity, candour, and mildness; as a general friend, a friend to justice, to the public, to mankind, to the party impeached. As a friend to justice, he should be careful that the defendant receive no wrong in his credit or interest; as a lover of the public, he should wish that no offences or scandals be found; out of humanity he should desire that no man may incur the blemish of guilt, or pain of suffering; he should tender the party's case as compassionate,

<sup>k</sup> Cum ipse sis reus, in alterum audes ferre sententiam?—Optat. [II. 25. p. 46.]

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and desire that he may be delivered from the evil threatening him: this should render him willing to acquit and free the party, apt to apprehend and interpret all things favourably, ready to excuse and mollify the business what he can; far from picking faults out of obscure surmises or slender pretences, from aggravating the miscarriages that are detected, from stretching the blame further than it will reach of itself, or making the case worse than it needs must be, from pronouncing a harsh or heavy sentence thereon. He should always be of counsel to the defendant, pleading his cause, so far as truth and equity will permit; putting himself in his case, and thence nowise dealing with him more rigorously than he, according to impartial judgment, should, in the like case, deem it equal that himself should be dealt with: in fine, however the matter in the result appear to stand, he should avoid rigour and extremity, he should exercise clemency and mercy.

If this course were observed, innumerable causes, which now are severely judged, would never be mentioned, or come under trial, but would presently be cast out; many would soon, after small discussion, be voided; few would pass that extremity of censure, which now, by the cruel asperity of men, they are forced to undergo: for do we not accuse men for things that are no faults? Do we not exaggerate the guilt of petty faults? Do we not insult over great miscarriages with too unmerciful severity, as if they were incorrigible and unpardonable?

Seeing then few of us, according to those reasonable qualifications and conditions, are capable

of being judges; seeing, if those equal rules were observed, most censures would be discarded; seeing hard it is for any man, either warrantably to undertake, or uprightly to discharge this office; great reason there is for this precept, most fit it is that we should be forbidden to judge.

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So much for the part explicative and directive; now for the persuasive; and for inducing us to eschew this practice, let us briefly declare the pravity and vanity of it; the performing which will, I suppose, be sufficient to dissuade and deter us from it. Be pleased only first to note, that some considerations, which we shall propound, will be applicable to some kind of bad censure, some to another, according to the several defects and incapacities we have to judge lawfully, upon the grounds already touched.

I Censuring is an impious practice in regard to God.

By taking upon ourselves to judge unduly, without authority, or beyond it, we do invade God's office, setting up ourselves as judges in his room; we usurp his right, exercising jurisdiction over his subjects, without order and license from him: it is St Paul's argument, *Who art thou that judgest another's servant?* that is, how intolerably bold and arrogant, how sacrilegiously injurious and profane art thou, to climb up into God's tribunal, and thence to pronounce doom upon his subjects?

Rom. xiv.

By rash judgment in matters not subject to our cognizance, (as when we pronounce concerning the secret thoughts and intentions of men,) we proudly and perversely do arrogate to ourselves the incommunicable perfections of God, who alone can know

**SERM.** such things, and determine rightly in such cases;  
**XXII.** who therefore hath reserved them to himself, com-  
**1 Cor. iv. 5.** manding us *To judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come.*

**Matt. iii.**  
**12; xiii.**  
**29; xxv.**  
**32.**

By passing sentence about the state of our neighbour, we do anticipate God's judgment, and by prejudging strive to frustrate it. We take upon us to purge his floor, to sever the chaff from the corn, and the tares from the wheat, to discriminate the goats from the sheep; which to perform will be the work of God's infinite wisdom and justice at the great day<sup>1</sup>.

**James iv.**  
**11.**

By censuring our brethren causelessly, for not complying with our conceits, humours, or practices, we lay hold upon and appropriate to ourselves God's legislative power; we subject his law to our fancy and pleasure; we in effect condemn his law of error and imperfection; we do at least make ourselves sharers with him in the enacting laws, and dispensing justice. *He, saith St James, that speaketh against his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law;* that is, he opprobriously doth imply the law to be defective, until he doth complete or correct it; making it a guilt not to satisfy his will or conceit, beside the plain intent of the law; the dispensation of justice is not sufficient, unless he partake therein, taxing whom and why he pleaseth; God without him is not a perfect lawgiver or judge.

<sup>1</sup> Quantus arrogantiae tumor est, quanta humilitatis ac lenitatis oblivio, arrogantiae suae quanta jactatio, ut quis aut audeat aut facere se posse credat, quod nec apostolis concessit Dominus, ut zizania a frumento putet se posse discernere, aut quasi ipsi palam ferre et arcam purgare concessum sit, paleas conetur a tritico separare.—Cypr. Ep. LII. [Opp. p. 74.]

We are also very ingrateful in not being favourable towards our brethren in judgment; when as God is in his judgment so benign, patient, and merciful toward us, who is not extreme to mark what we do amiss; is not forward to seek or find faults, but rather waiteth to be gracious, hideth his face from our sins, and passeth by our transgressions; doth not aggravate our offences, but rather doth excuse them, remembering that we are flesh; is not glad of occasion to punish, but delighteth in mercy, and doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men; is not severe, but punisheth us less than our iniquities deserve, and in his wrath remembereth mercy. And are we not impious if we do so ill requite him, and so little resemble him, in being rigorous and harsh toward our brethren, when they offend, or seem to do so?

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Ps. cxxx.

3.

Isai. xxx.

18.

Ps. li. 9.

Micah vii.

18.

Ps. lxxviii.

39; ciii. 14.

Micah vii.

18.

Lam. iii.

33.

Ezra ix. 13.

Hab. iii. 2.

In fine, censuring is impious, as involving the violation of those great commandments, of exercising, in all our demeanour and dealing, humility, meekness, pity, and mercy toward our brethren; of pursuing and promoting peace among them.

2 Censuring, in respect to our neighbour, is an unjust practice. It is unjust to meddle in affairs with which we have nothing to do; to draw those persons under our jurisdiction who are not subject to it, but are liable to render their account at another bar; to punish those in their reputation or interest, over whom we have no just authority, who have their own master, to whom they must stand or fall.

Rom. xiv.

4.

It is most unjust to judge any man without competent means of knowing, or skill to determine his case; to condemn him without diligent trial,



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without certain proof, without full conviction of his fault; to punish him without just cause, or beyond due measure.

It is very unjust to usurp an interest in the goods, which are to our neighbour most proper and dear, whereon his credit and concernments depend, disposing of them as we please, to his disadvantage and prejudice.

It is also very unjust, when as we do need the candid judgment, the forbearance and pardon of others, for many things faulty and offensive that we commit, to refuse the like to others<sup>m</sup>.

3 Censuring is also a very uncharitable practice, and so contrary to the principal duty of our Religion: it is so eminently, in all cases wherein it is unjust; for charity doth virtually contain justice, and transcendeth it; it is so peculiarly, whenever it is harsh or rigorous, when it is affected, when it is needless or unprofitable; for charity disposeth us to be gentle, meek, patient, and merciful in all our dealings; it engages us to hide and smother, to diminish and excuse, to pass by and pardon offences: *Charity thinketh no evil, it covereth all things, it beareth all things*; it tendereth our neighbour's good and advantage of all kinds, (his credit, his interest, his convenience, and pleasure;) it therefore will inflict no more evil than reason and necessity shall indispensably require<sup>n</sup>.

<sup>m</sup>

*Æquum est*

*Peccatis veniam poscentem reddere rursus.*

*Hor. Sat. i. 3, [74.]*

*Det ille veniam facile, cui venia est opus.*

*Sen. Tr. [Agam. 267.]*

<sup>n</sup> Καὶ γὰρ οὕτως ἔχω ἐν τοῖς ἀμφιβάλοις, νέειν χρῆναι πρὸς τὸ φιλόανθρωπον, καὶ ἀπογινώσκειν μᾶλλον, ἢ καταγινώσκειν τῶν ὑπαιτίων.  
—Greg. Naz. [Or. xxi. Opp. Tom. i. p. 395 A.]

A censurer is indeed unjust and uncharitable, not only toward those whom he censureth, but also toward those, into whom thereby he doth infuse ill opinion, and ill will toward their neighbour; he is guilty of their injustice and uncharitableness, a mischief more irreparable than his own. SERM.  
XXII.

4 Censuring is a very foolish and vain practice in manifold respects<sup>o</sup>; as arguing great ignorance and inconsiderateness, as producing grievous inconveniences and mischiefs, especially to the practiser of it.

It signifieth, that we do not well understand or not well consider the natural impotency and frailty of mankind; how liable others are to mistake and slip, and how prone we ourselves are thereto; how as St James saith, *In many things we offend all*; James iii. 2. did we observe, or would weigh this, we should not be so forward to censure, or so vehement and bitter in it; we should see failing and tripping in many things to be a common case, rather demanding commiseration than censure.

It implieth also, that we little consider how our escaping any faults, which our neighbour slippeth into, is nowise imputable to any worth or virtue in us, so much as the good providence and merciful grace of God, guarding or rescuing us from them; if we did apprehend and reflect on this, it would appear our duty, rather to bless God for our being protected from miscarriages, than censoriously to insult over those, who seem to fall into them. It signifieth we have no sight or sense of our own defects; for did we clearly see, did we humbly

<sup>o</sup> Est enim proprium stultitiæ, aliorum vitia cernere, oblivisci suorum.—Cic. Tusc. [iii. 30, 73.]

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resent them, that would damp our heat and earnestness to censure. It declares a fond self-conceit, that we deem ourselves superior to our neighbour in wisdom, and less obnoxious to blame, and therefore fit to be his judges; whereas, according to a sober esteem of ourselves, we should appear more fit to stand at the bar, than to sit upon the bench; and should thence more dread the one, than affect the other.

It sheweth likewise, that we do not rightly conceive the nature, or worthily esteem the consequences of this practice: we know not, or regard not, the value of our neighbour's reputation, which, by censure, we do mean to ruin or impair: we perhaps by no means would rob him of his substance, or of his life; yet we scruple not, by grievous censure, to bereave him of his good name; which he, the best prizer of his own goods, may esteem beyond his estate or his life itself: we think it nothing, or a slight matter to carp at him; but he feeleth it very painful, and deeply resenteth it.

Prov. xii.  
16; xxix.  
11.

It argueth in us an untamed fierceness of mind and discomposedness of passion, which can never consist or cohabit with wisdom; for a well-ordered, calm, and free mind will be slow in conceiving offence or dislike, moderate in estimating things, reserved in expressing its sentiments, not easily transported into extremity or excess; it consequently hardly will suffer a man to break forth into rash or harsh censure. So many signs and arguments of incogitancy and blindness this practice doth involve.

5 Furthermore, this practice will produce many great inconveniences and mischiefs to us.

1 We do thereby provoke, and in a sort authorize others, to requite us in the same kind<sup>p</sup>: for nothing more doth excite the indignation, doth inflame the anger, doth engender the hatred of men toward us, than being pragmatical in finding fault, and hasty to censure their doings causelessly or immoderately; nothing seeming to them a more certain argument that we bear them ill will, or do contemn them; and if we so vex them, they will in requital be as ready, by finding or making faults in us, to vex and trouble us; it engageth their care, and quickeneth their industry, and whetteth their invention to observe or devise matter of recrimination. Men think it, not only lawful, but even needful for them, in their own defence, to disparage the censurer, that his judgment may have the less weight to their prejudice: so that it will infallibly come upon us, as our Lord warneth, using it as an argument to dissuade us from this practice, that, *With what judgment we judge, we shall be judged; and with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again.* Men take it for allowable to retaliate in this way to the height, and stoutly to load the censorious man with censure.

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Matt. vii.  
2.  
Luke vi.  
37, 38.

2 We do, by this practice, not only expose ourselves to censure, but implicitly, and according to ready consequence, do pass it upon ourselves, seeing we seldom, in kind or equivalently, are ourselves clear of that which we charge upon others<sup>q</sup>; with our own weapon of sharp censure, we, through

<sup>p</sup>

At tibi contra

Evonit, inquirant vitia ut tua rursus et illi.

Hor. Sat. i. 3. [27.]

<sup>q</sup> Vid. Chrys. in Matt. Hom. xxxvi. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 249.]

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 2 Sam. xii. 5.  
 Rom. ii. 1. another's side, do imprudently wound ourselves; and often, as David did in his parley with Nathan, adjudge ourselves to capital punishment; so that to any censorious person it may be said, in St Paul's words, *Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.*

3 We do, by censuring others, aggravate our own faults, and deprive them of excuse, and render ourselves incapable of mercy and pardon<sup>r</sup>: for of all men, he that is forward and prone to censure, who is rigorous and severe in judging others, deserveth no favour, nor can reasonably pretend thereto. *Inexcusable*, saith St Paul, *art thou, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest: for, thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?* And, *Μὴ στενάζετε κατ' ἀλλήλων*, *Do not*, saith St James, *moanfully complain one against another, lest you be condemned; and, He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy*, in his judgment, saith the same apostle. Which passages imply, that to be unmerciful in this kind, will expose us to the severity of judgment in regard to our offences<sup>s</sup>; or, that if we

Rom. ii. 1, 3.  
 James v. 9.  
 ii. 13.

<sup>r</sup> 'Ο γὰρ πικρῶς τὰ ἀλλότρια ἐξετάζων ἐν τοῖς καθ' ἑαυτὸν πλημμελήμασιν οὐδεμιᾶς ἀπολαύσεται συγγνώμης ποτέ.—Id. Ἄνδρ. γ'. [Tom. vi. p. 479.]

—Τῶν ἀνθρώπων οἱ πλείστοι βραδεῖς μὲν εἰσι τῶν ἰδίων κριταὶ, ταχεῖς δὲ τῶν ἀλλοτρίων ἐξετασταί.—Greg. Naz. [Or. xxxii. Opp. Tom. i. p. 588 E.]

Οὕτω τῶν μὲν ἑτέροις ἀμαρτανομένων πικροὶ καθήμεθα δικασταί, τὰς δὲ ἑαυτῶν δοκοὺς παρορῶμεν.—Chrys. ad Demet. [Or. xii. Tom. vi. p. 144.]

<sup>s</sup> Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως τῶν πεπλημμελημένων ἡμῖν μόνον,

deal harshly with our brethren now, God will then proceed the more severely toward us, when our great cause doth come under trial. SERM.  
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4 Indeed censuring others is an argument, that we do little mind our own case, or consider to what a dreadful judgment we do stand obnoxious: did we think of that, we should see cause, rather to employ our leisure and care in stating our own accounts, than in examining those of others; more advisable it would appear to mind our own case, than to busy ourselves in canvassing and determining the state of our neighbour; finding what great need our actions will have, in that day, of favourable construction and merciful allowance, we should become candid and mild in reflecting upon the actions of others; we should not be forward to carp at any thing, we should scarce have the heart to condemn any man; this St Paul seemeth to imply, when he thus argueth: *Why dost thou judge thy brother, or why dost thou set at nought thy brother?* Rom. xiv. 10. *We shall all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ:* that is, why do any of us judge others, seeing we must all be judged ourselves? It is not seemly, it is not expedient for those, who soon must be arraigned, and put to answer for themselves, to be busy in questioning and prejudging others;

ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς κρίσεως τῆς σῆς περὶ ἐτέρων οἴσει τὴν ψῆφον ὁ Θεός.—Id. [Ἀνδρ. γ'. Tom. vi. p. 479.]

. Ὡσπερ γὰρ ὁ φιλόανθρωπος, καὶ ἡμερος, καὶ συγγνωμονικὸς ὑποτέμνεται τὸν πλείονα τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων ὄγκον· οὕτως ὁ πικρὸς, καὶ ὠμὸς, καὶ ἀπαραίτητος πολὺ τοῖς οἰκεῖοις ἀμαρτήμασι προστίθῃσι μέγεθος.—Id. Ibid.

† Τὰ ἡμέτερα ἐξετάζωμεν καὶ οὐδένα ἐροῦμεν κακῶς.—Id. in 2 Tim. Or. II. [Tom. iv. p. 338.]

SERM. but rather to spend their care and pains in pre-  
XXII. paring for their own account.

5 Nothing indeed more causeth us to neglect our own case, nothing more engageth us to leave our own faults unobserved and uncorrected, than this humour<sup>u</sup>. It is easy to observe, that, as they who are most sparing and gentle in censure are usually most exempt from blame, (for that carefully reflecting upon their own infirmities and defects, spending their heat and activity of spirit upon amending their own errors and faults, they have less time, less concernment, less mind to search out and scan the imperfections and misdemeanours of others; they do find less reason also, and therefore have less will to be fierce or severe toward them,) so the most censorious are usually the most stupid in discerning, and most careless in retrenching their own faults<sup>x</sup>. And needs it must be so, for the actions of other men devour their leisure, take up the intention of their spirits, employ the keenness of their passions upon them, so that they cannot and will not attend to themselves; they are so much abroad, they are so very busy elsewhere, that they little know or care what is done at home; while they are spying and pulling out motes from their brother's eye, they consider not the

Matt. vii.  
3, 4.

<sup>u</sup> Οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἄνθρωπον κακηγοροῦντα, καὶ τοὺς ἀλλοτρίους πολυπραγμονοῦντα βίους τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιμεληθῆναί ποτε ζωῆς. τῆς γὰρ σπουδῆς ἀπάσης αὐτῷ εἰς τὴν ἐτέρων πολυπραγμοσύνην ἀναλίσκομένης, ἀνάγκη τὰ αὐτοῦ πάντα ἀπλῶς κείσθαι καὶ ἡμελημένως.—Id. Ἄνδρ. γ'. [Tom. vi. p. 479.]

<sup>x</sup> Vid. Chrys. in Matt. Orat. XLII. [Tom. II. p. 278.]

Sen. de Vit. B. XXVII.

Βραδὺ γὰρ εἰς ὑπόνοιαν κακοῦ, τὸ πρὸς κακίαν δυσκίνητον.—Greg. Naz. [Orat. XII. Opp. Tom. I. p. 249 D.]

beam that is in their own eye, although never so gross and obvious. SERM.  
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6 Hence, I say, it is, that commonly the best men are the most candid and gentle, and they are most apt to blame others, who deserve worse themselves'; that the sharpest tongues and foulest lives do usually go together; that they, who are the strictest judges of their own, are the fairest interpreters of other men's actions; and they, who will least pardon others, do most excuse themselves; that they, who are strangely acute in descrying other men's faults, are stark blind in discerning their own. Our Saviour therefore chargeth such persons with hypocrisy; *Thou hypocrite; first cast* Matt. vii. 5. *the beam out of thine own eye;* implying, that they do but falsely pretend a respect for goodness and zeal against sin, seeing in their own practice they indulge it; that it is indeed rather pride, peevishness, idleness, spleen, or selfish design that acteth them.

7 In fine, the censorious humour, as it argueth ill nature to be predominant, (a vulturous nature, which easily smelleth out, and hastily flieth toward, and greedily feedeth on carrion,) as it signifieth bad conscience; for he that knoweth evil of himself is most prone to suspect, and most quick to pronounce ill concerning others, so it breedeth and fostereth such ill dispositions; it debaucheth the minds of men, rendering them dim and doltish in

Ἵ Τὸ κακίας ἐλεύθερον, καὶ ὑφορᾶσθαι κακίαν ἀργότερον. — Id. [Ep. xxi. Opp. Tom. ii. p. 34 B.]

Ὁ μὲν γὰρ κακὸς τάχιστα ἂν καταγνοίῃ καὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ· ὁ ἀγαθὸς δὲ οὐδὲ τοῦ κακοῦ ῥαδίως. — Id. Orat. xxi. [Tom. i. p. 395 A.]

Egomet mi ignosco, Mænius inquit.

Stultus et improbus hic amor est, dignusque notari.

Hor. [Sat. i. 3, 23.]



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apprehending their own faults, negligent and heedless in regard to their own hearts and ways; apt to please and comfort themselves in the evils, real or imaginary, of their neighbours; which to do is a very barbarous and brutish practice.

These considerations may, I hope, suffice to persuade the observance of this precept, by the help of God's grace, to which I commend you, and conclude.

Heb. xiii.  
20, 21.

*Now the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

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## SERMON XXIII.

### OF QUIETNESS, AND DOING OUR OWN BUSINESS.

I THESS. IV. 11.

*And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business.*

AS frequently between neighbouring states there SERM.  
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do rise dissensions and contests about the just limits of their territories; so doth it frequently happen between virtue and vice, right and wrong, duty and miscarriage in practice; for, although the extreme degrees, and even the middle regions of these things are very distant, yet the borders of them do lie very close together, and are in a manner contiguous; a certain ridge of separation running between them, which commonly, being very narrow, thin, and obscure, it is not easy to discern. So it particularly falleth out in the matter before us, wherein our text is concerned. Duty and offence do nearly confine, and almost indistinguishably differ one from the other; for there are about this case precepts which seem to contradict; there are duties appearing to thwart one another.

St Paul here biddeth us to be studious or ambitious of quiet; otherwhere he enjoineth us to be earnestly active, (to be *Not slothful in business*, τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί:) here he would have us to mind <sup>Rom. xii. 11.</sup>

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Phil. ii. 4.

our own affairs; otherwhere he prescribeth, that we should *Not look every man to his own things, but every man also to the things of others.*

According to the general drift of scripture, and the tenor of our Religion, we are in charity obliged to concern ourselves heartily for the good of our neighbour, and to strive earnestly in promoting it; we are enjoined so far to interpose and meddle in the affairs of others, as to watch over them for their good; to instruct and advise them, to admonish and excite them, to check and reprove them upon occasion; to offer and yield them succour, to compose differences between them; to promote their edification and peace: *Let us, saith the apostle to the Hebrews, consider one another, κατανοῶμεν ἀλλήλους, to provoke unto love and to good works. Let us, saith St Paul to the Romans, follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another; and, Comfort yourselves together, and edify one another;—Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, saith he to the Thessalonians in this Epistle.*

Rom. xiv.  
19; xv. 2.

1 Thess. v.  
11, 14.

Tit. i. 11.

To be zealous and earnest in the maintenance and propagation of truth, of virtue, of piety, is a duty incumbent on us, which implieth care and activity concerning others; that we offer to instruct them; that we enter into contest with them; that we examine their words and actions; that we presume to tax and oppose them.

In fine; our Religion doth seem by the bands of mutual relation, and obligations of charity, so to unite us together, so to endear us to one another, and to all men, that all things belonging to our

brethren do nearly touch us, and should answerably affect us; so that, by intermeddling with any thing relating to their welfare, we can hardly be said to meddle with what doth not concern us. SERM.  
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The condition of things also may seem to require, that we so intermeddle; for the duties and affairs of men are so entangled or interwoven, that we can hardly prosecute any concernments of our own, without being engaged in the matters of others: in discharging all offices of society, in pursuance of any traffic or commerce, in all intercourse and conversation, while we transact our own business, we cannot avoid the furthering or obstructing the business of others, who are engaged in the same or contrary designs. Society doth subsist by combinations of care and pain regarding common interests, so that it seemeth impossible so to mind our own business, as not to meddle with the business of others.

Yet notwithstanding St Paul enjoineth us so to affect quiet, as simply to mind our own business, or not to be meddlesome in the concernments of others; for that *Doing our own business* is meant exclusively to meddling with the affairs of others, is plain enough by the importance of *τὰ ἴδια*, which is emphatical, and signifieth only our own, or our proper business; and because it is joined with being quiet, which respecteth others, and importeth not stirring beyond our own bounds; to be so meddlesome, being also a practice expressly condemned by St Peter, in that prohibition, *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as a malefactor, or as a busybody in other men's matters:* where pragmaticalness is, we see, not only 1 Pet. iv.  
15.

SERM. forbidden, but is coupled with the most heinous  
XXIII. offences.

How then shall we reconcile these things? How shall we in the case sever between the bounds of duty and blame? It is indeed somewhat difficult to do it precisely, and with distinctions which shall reach all cases. But somewhat I shall endeavour toward it, by propounding some rules and directions, which should commonly be observed in our dealing and intercourse with others: but first, let us a little reflect upon the terms in which the precept is couched.

*Study to be quiet.* *Study*; the word is φιλοτιμεῖσθαι, which signifieth to be ambitious, that is, to affect quiet with the like vehemency of desire and care, as men are wont to pursue reputation, dignity, and power, the objects of ambition: the expression containeth a remarkable emphasis, or a grave acumen; for, whereas ambition commonly doth prompt men to be restlessly busy, and engageth them in the concernments proper to others, St Paul biddeth them to be ambitious the contrary way, in affecting quiet, and abstinence from other affairs beside their own.

*To be quiet*: This doth signify not a physical, but a moral rest; not a total forbearance of action; not a fastidious or drowsy listlessness to do any thing; not a senseless indifferency concerning the matters of others; not an absolute sequestering ourselves from common affairs: this is not quiet or tranquillity, the *Τὸ ἡσυχάζειν* here, but a naughty sloth, stupidity, or savageness: the quiet here meant is opposed to disorderly motion, to turbulence, to contention, to pragmatistical curiosity, to

all such exorbitant behaviour, whereby the right of others is infringed, their peace disturbed, their just interest or welfare anywise prejudiced. This quiet is a calm, steady, regular way of proceeding, within the bounds and measures prescribed by reason, justice and charity, modesty and sobriety: such a motion as the heavenly bodies do keep, which so move that they seem ever to stand still, and never disturb one another: in fine, what a quiet is meant, the subsequent words and the context do shew: it followeth,

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And, *To do our own business*, πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια, or to act things proper and pertinent to us; things which suit to our condition, our station, our vocation; whereby we may discharge our own duties, and supply our own needs; may work benefit to others, or however avoid being anywise burdensome or troublesome to them; an instance of which practice is immediately subjoined; *To work with our own hands—that we may have lack of nothing*; in another place St Paul calleth it, *To work with quiet*, 2 Thess. iii. 12. μετὰ ἡσυχίας ἐργάζεσθαι, opposing it to περιεργάζεσθαι, being over-busy, or pragmatically curious, and to walking disorderly; that is, beyond the bounds of our calling, or the rules of our duty; so as to encroach upon the rights, or molest the quiet of others.

The words then, as they do imply an obligation lying upon us to be industrious in our own business, so they chiefly design to prohibit our meddling with the concernments of others; but how to settle the limits between this quiet minding our own business, and a culpable neglect of the duties concerning others; how to distinguish between

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meddling innocently, from being blameably meddlesome, *Hoc opus, hic labor est*<sup>a</sup>, this is that hard task which I am to undertake, but cannot hope thoroughly to perform. However, the method toward it, which I shall observe, is this: First, I shall touch some cases, in which it is allowable or commendable to meddle with the affairs of others: then, I shall propound some general rules, according to which such meddlesomeness is commonly blameable: in the next place, I shall assign some directions proper to some chief and most obvious kinds of meddling: and lastly, offer some considerations to dissuade men from this pragmatical humour.

1 Superiors may intermeddle with the business of their inferiors, (that is, of such as are subject to their care and charge,) in all matters relating to the needful execution of their office. Magistrates may inspect the carriage, may examine the doings, may reprehend and punish the offences of their subjects, parents may advise, rebuke, and correct their children: spiritual guides and pastors may admonish and reprove their flock. These things while, with due prudence, equity, and moderation, they perform, they do indeed *Do their own business*, *πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια*; it is their proper work, to which God hath designed them, and which reason exacteth of them; they are appointed, to use St Paul's expression, *To attend continually upon this very thing*; their proceedings therefore are not to be charged with culpable pragmaticalness.

Rom. xiii.  
6.

2 In any case, wherein the honour and interest of God is much concerned, we may interpose in

<sup>a</sup> [Virg. *Æn.* vi. 129.]

vindication and maintenance of them. If any man dareth to blaspheme God's name, we may and ought to stand up in its defence; if any man disparageth Religion, we should strive to clear its repute; if any man impugneth any divine truth of moment, we should endeavour to assert it; if any man notoriously transgresseth God's law, we may discountenance his presumption, and reprove him for it: every man in such cases, as God's subject, hath not only a commission, but an obligation; is indeed by his allegiance bound to serve God, in maintaining the honour and interest of his empire: it is foul disloyalty, it is pitiful baseness to forbear meddling in such cases<sup>b</sup>. Thus have good men, without fear or shame, defended Religion and truth against the mightiest powers and most dangerous oppositions that could be: thus *Stood up Phinehas*, Ps. cvi. 30. *and executed judgment*, not only checking, but avenging that heinous scandal: thus Elias maintained the true worship of God against all the corrupters of it, the kings and whole nation of Israel: thus the Prophets did not forbear to tax the wicked manners of the princes, the priests, and the people in their times: thus St John Baptist did not stick to reprove king Herod for his unlawful practice: so our Saviour censured the superstitious and hypocritical scribes, and he chastised the profaners of God's house: so, in fine, the holy Apostles

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<sup>b</sup> Κοινόν ἐστὶ τὸ ἔγκλημα, δημόσιον τὸ ἀδίκημα· ἕξεστιν ἐκάστῳ τῶν βουλομένων κατηγορεῖν.—Chrys. Ἄνδρ. α'. [Opp. Tom. vi. p. 460.]

Κἂν ἀκούσης τινὸς ἐν ἀμφόδῳ, ἢ ἐν ἀγορᾷ μέση βλασφημοῦντος τὸν Θεόν, πρόσελθε, ἐπιτίμησον κἂν πληγὰς ἐπιθεῖναι δέη, μὴ παραιτήσῃ. ῥάπισον αὐτοῦ τὴν ὄψιν, σύντριψον αὐτοῦ τὸ στόμα, ἀγίασον σοῦ τὴν χεῖρα διὰ τῆς πληγῆς. &c.—Id. [ibid.]



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XXIII. resolutely did assert God's truth against all the world.

3 When the public weal and safety are manifestly concerned, we may also intermeddle to support or secure them: so may we rebuke him that slandereth or reproacheth our prince; we may check him that would break the peace, we may impeach him that violateth the laws, conducing to public welfare: every man is a soldier against traitors and enemies of his country; every man is born with a commission to defend the public against those which plot its ruin or harm; every man is a party for his prince against rebels, for the church against schismatics, for the law against lawless transgressors, for common peace against those who outrageously disturb it: duty to our superiors, justice and charity to mankind, just regard to our own welfare, allow and oblige us to such meddling.

4 We may also meddle for the succour of right against palpable wrong and outrage: we may help an honest man against a thief assaulting him; we may guard the life of any man against an assassin; we may vindicate the reputation of an innocent person aspersed by a slanderous tongue; as Moses,—  
*Acts vii. 24. Seeing one of his brethren suffer wrong, defended him; and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian;* as the penitent thief rebuked his companion, unjustly railing upon our Saviour: the common interest of justice and charity do not only excuse, but commend meddling in such cases.

5 We may likewise meddle with the proceedings of others, when our own just defence requireth

it: we may repel<sup>c</sup> those who attack our safety or peace, who invade or rifle our goods, who traduce our good name; we may endeavour to defeat their plots, and to restrain their violence. This is indeed doing our own business; for to preserve our life with its conveniences and comforts, to maintain our right and just interest, to keep our honour and reputation clear from scandal, is incumbent upon us; we are naturally the patrons, advocates, and guards of those considerable goods assigned or intrusted to us by Providence.

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6 When the life or welfare, either spiritual or temporal, of our neighbour is deeply concerned, and cannot otherwise than by our aid be supported or relieved, we may lawfully interpose to yield it: if we see him exposing his life to any great hazard, or engaging his soul into any great sin, we may in any fair way, (by admonition, advice, reproof, politic device, harmless force,) without any invitation or license, with or against his will, presume to reclaim or restrain him. We may stop him in his career to ruin or grievous mischief, we may withhold him from running into a snare, or tumbling down a precipice, or drinking in poison; we may, as St Jude speaketh, snatch him out of the fire<sup>d</sup>. Jude 23. In such cases we may reasonably suppose, that our neighbour, being himself, will allow us to meddle, or will not be displeased therewith; if he hath not his wits about him, we may supply him with ours in such exigence<sup>e</sup>: his present consent and appro-

<sup>c</sup> Cum moderamine inculpatæ tutelæ.

<sup>d</sup> Ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς ἀπαράσσωres.

<sup>e</sup> Quodcunque [quod cuique] pro eo præstatur, invito non tribuitur.—Reg. Jur. [Corp. Jur. Civ. Dig. Lib. L. Tit. xvii. 156. § 4.]

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bation are not then requisite, he not being in condition to yield them; he needeth guardians, and opportunity constituteth us in that office: extreme and evident need will not only excuse the liberty we shall assume, but it obligeth us to use our power to save him; in case of neglect, that surly answer, *Am I my brother's keeper?* will not serve our turn<sup>1</sup>. We may, we should, it is not only innocent, but just and laudable for us to be watchful over our neighbour's concernment and deportment, if we do it out of pure charity, in a discreet, quiet, and gentle manner.

Gen. iv. 9.

7 In fine, if any signal opportunity of doing our neighbour considerable good, especially to his soul, doth offer itself, we may lawfully, we should in charity embrace it: we may then even obtrude upon him our direction and succour; if he be so blind as not to discern our good will, so peevish as to dislike our proceeding, so ingrateful as not to thank us for our pains, yet our good intent will justify us before God, and at the bar of reason: and we have, to countenance us therein, the common example of good men, who, for doing thus, have worthily been accounted the friends and benefactors of mankind.

In these and the like cases we may, without offending, intermeddle; in doing so we may indeed truly be said to be quiet, and to do our own business; because there is no exorbitancy or disorder in

Furiosi [vel ejus, cui bonis interdictum sit] nulla voluntas est.—  
Reg. Jur. [Ibid. Tit. xvii. 40.]

<sup>1</sup> Μή μοι λέγε τὸ ψυχρὸν τοῦτο ῥῆμα· τί δέ μοι μέλει· οὐδὲν ἔχω κοινὸν πρὸς αὐτόν.—Chrys. Ἀνδρ. α'. [Opp. Tom. vi. p. 461.]  
Vid. in Matt. Hom. lxxvii., lxxviii. in Joan. Hom. xv. in Eph. Orat. xix. in Tit. Orat. v. in Hebr. Orat. xxx.

such proceeding, because God's law and sound reason have appropriated these things to us, and made them our concernment. There is no business more proper or pertinent to us, than that wherein we labour to promote the glory of God, or to procure the good of men; this is the principal design of our being, and therefore employment therein cannot misbecome us: but we must however in such cases take heed, that our pretences are real and well grounded, that our proceedings are regular and fair: we must not take or use such liberty maliciously; we must never, out of hypocritical pretence to the maintenance of God's honour, of public good, of justice, truth, or peace, be irregularly pragmatical or turbulent: this is to be doubly bad, adding to the irregularity of offence, the wickedness of fraud and malice.

II. 1 We should never, out of ambition, covetous desire, or self-conceit, so meddle as to invade any man's office, or to assume the exercise of it. A private man should not presume to act the prince or the statesman, offering to control those who are not under him, to deliberate, debate, determine, or pass censure about political affairs or occurrences. A layman should not intrude himself to administer the sacred functions of authoritative teaching, of dispensing the sacraments, of exercising spiritual censures, of defining theological controversies, which are committed to the guides and pastors of the church. No man should set himself upon the tribunal to judge, or undertake, without license or invitation, to arbitrate the causes of others: doing thus is to encroach upon God, and to usurp upon man: we encroach upon God, assuming to our-

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 XXIII. deserting the station assigned to us by his providence; we usurp upon man, exercising authority over him, which he is not bound to stoop unto.

2 We should not, without call or allowance, meddle with our superiors, so as to advise them, to reprehend them, to blame or inveigh against their proceedings; for this is to confound the right order of things, to trespass beyond the bounds of our calling and station, to do wrong, not only to them, but to the public, which is concerned in the upholding their power and respect: it is indeed a worse fault than assuming the ensigns of their dignity, or counterfeiting their stamps; for that is but to borrow the semblance, this is to enjoy the substance of their authority.

Nothing, in this busy and licentious age, is more usual, than for private men to invade the office, to exercise the duties, to canvass and control the actions of their superiors; discussing what they ought to do, and prescribing laws to them; taxing what is done by them; murmuring at their decrees, and inveighing against their proceedings: every one is finding holes in the state, and picking quarrels with the conduct of political affairs: every one is reforming and settling the public according to models framed in his own conceit. Things, saith one, are out of order; the constitution is very defective, and ought to be corrected; such a law in all reason should be repealed, and such an one enacted; here our statesmen were out of their politics, and there our lawgivers failed in point of equity or prudence. No, clamours another no less eagerly, all things stand as well as can be; nothing

can be amended, or ought to be altered; our establishment in all respects is more perfect than Plato's commonwealth, or the state of Utopia. Thus doth each man appoint himself counsellor of state, and turns legislator without any call from the king, or choice of the country: every one snatcheth at the sceptre, and invests himself with the senator's robe: every one acteth a prince and a bishop, or indeed is rather a censor and controller of both orders; not considering the wrong he committeth, nor the arrogance he practiseth, nor the mischiefs which naturally ensue upon such demeanour: for to direct or to check governors is in effect to exauctorate or depose them, substituting ourselves in their room: and what greater injury can we do them or the public? To fix or reverse laws belongeth to the highest authority and deepest wisdom, which it is enormous presumption for us to arrogate to ourselves: by attempting such things we confound the ranks of men, and course of things; we ruffle the world, we supplant public tranquillity; and what greater mischief than this can we do among men?

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It is the business and duty of those, whom God hath constituted his representatives and ministers, to deliberate and conclude what is to be done; and for the due performance of their charge they are accountable to their master, not to us; *Nobis obsequii gloria relictæ est*<sup>s</sup>; our duty and our privilege (for so it is, if we could understand it, it being far more easy and safe) it is to submit and obey with quiet and patience; if we do more, we are therein

<sup>s</sup> Tibi summum rerum judicium dii dedere; nobis obsequii gloria relictæ est.—M. Terent. apud Tac. Ann. [vi. 8.].

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Eccles. viii.

4.  
1 Pet. ii.  
13.

Phil. ii. 14.

2 Pet. ii.  
10.

irregular, and no less undutiful to God than to our superiors ; we forget those divine rules and precepts ; *Where the word of a king is, there is power ; and who may say to him, What doest thou ? Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. Do all things without murmurings and disputings.* We consider not what judgments are denounced upon those whose character it is, *To despise government, to be presumptuous and self-willed, not to be afraid to speak evil of dignities.*

We do not weigh the nature of the things we meddle with, nor the advantages of the persons whom we tax, nor our own incapacity to judge rightly about them. There is a kind of sacredness in the mysteries of state : as the mysteries of faith do surpass natural reason, so do those of state transcend vulgar capacity : as priests, by special grace, are qualified best to understand the one, so are princes, by like peculiar assistance, enabled to penetrate the former. He that employeth them in that great work of governing the world, and maketh them instruments of his providence, is not wanting in affording to them direction and aid needful for the discharge of their duty ; whence their judgments of things are somewhat more than human, and their words may with us pass for oracular ; *A divine sentence, the wise king said, is in the lips of the king ; his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.* According to the ordinary reason of things, they are best able to judge of such things, being, by reason of their eminent station, able to discern more and further than others ; having, by experience and constant practice, acquired a truer insight into things, and a better

Prov. xvi.  
10.

skill to manage them : whereas we, being placed  
beneath in a valley, can have no good prospect  
upon the grounds and causes of their resolutions  
and proceedings : we, for want of sufficient use and  
exercise, cannot skill to balance the contrary  
weights and reasons of things ; to surmount the  
difficulties and rubs, to unfold the knots and in-  
trigues, which occur in affairs of that kind ; we  
cannot expect those special influences of light and  
strength from heaven toward judging of affairs,  
which do not properly concern us : wherefore we  
are altogether incompetent judges, and impertinent  
dealers about those things ; it is great odds, that in  
doing so we shall mistake and misbehave our-  
selves ; we consequently do vainly and naughtily  
to meddle with them. If the love of public good  
doth transport us, let us restrain ourselves.

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3 We should not indeed so much as meddle with  
the affairs of our equals, (those I mean not, who do  
equal us in dignity or worth, but all such, who are  
not subject to our command or charge, however  
otherwise inferior to us : those, I say, we should  
not meddle with,) so as to control or cross them ;  
to direct, or check, or censure their proceedings  
against their will, or without special reason en-  
gaging us thereto : for this is also to usurp an  
undue authority, this argueth self-conceit, this con-  
taineth immodesty and arrogance.

4 We should not, without the desire or leave  
of parties concerned, intermeddle in the smaller  
temporal interests of others, upon pretence to fur-  
ther them, or with design to cross them ; for every  
man should be left to himself to choose and to  
manage his own business, prosecuting it in the



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method he best liketh, (consistent with law and justice toward others,) without interruption or control: every man hath a right to do so, every man desireth it, every man commonly hath a capacity sufficient for it; for each man is apt to study his own business, to weigh his case, to poise his abilities with the circumstances in which he standeth; and thence is likely to get righter notions concerning the state of his affairs, to descry better ways of accomplishing them, than others, less regarding them, can do: every man is best acquainted with his own humour and temper, and thence can pick his business, and wind the management of it, so that it shall comply with them, or not grate upon them. However, as every man, in point of interest and honour, is most concerned in the success, and suffereth most by frustration of his endeavours, so it is equal, that a free choice of his proceedings should be allowed him, without impediment or disturbance; which enjoying, he will more contentedly bear any disappointment that shall happen. This especially we say, in respect to matters of lesser consequence, (such as most worldly interests are,) by the ill success whereof our neighbour is not extremely damaged or hurt; for in such cases the immodesty and arrogancy of meddling, with the vexation and trouble it is apt to work, do commonly much outweigh any benefit we can presume by our meddling to procure.

5 We should not indeed ever, in matters of indifferent and innocent nature, so far meddle, as, without considerable reason or need, to infringe any man's liberty, to cross his humour, to obstruct

his pleasure, however discordant these may be to our judgment and palate. Every man hath a particular gust for diet, for garb, for divertisements and disports, (arising from particular complexion, or other unaccountable causes,) and fit it is, that he should satisfy it; it is enough, that what he doeth seemeth good, and relisheth to himself: if we check him therein, we shall seem impertinent and troublesome, and therefore we shall really be so; for it is not our office to be tasters, to be dressers, to be masters of the sports to all men: we in such matters would please our own fancy, and therefore we should not about them offend others; it is incivility, it is injustice to do it.

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6 We should never offer to put a force upon any man's inclination, or strive to bend it unto a compliance with ours; in attempting that we shall commonly be disappointed, and we shall never come fairly off: for some are so tough, they will never yield to us; none will comply against the grain, without regret and displeasure: if you extort a compliance with your desire, you thereby do lose their good opinion and good will; for no man liketh to be overborne with violence or importunity.

7 We should not, in conversation, meddle so as to impose our opinions and conceits upon others: in conversation with our equals, we have a liberty to propound our judgment, and declare our reasons for it; but if our judgment doth not take, nor our reasons persuade, we should have done; to press further is rude, to be displeased for it is vain, to be angry or violent is unjust; for, by the law of conversation, every man taketh himself to have an

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absolute right to use and follow his own reason; and he that affects to deprive any man thereof, will pass for a petty tyrant, a clown, or an idiot. To retain the satisfaction which our own persuasion affordeth, is enough to content a just and sober mind, without triumphing over the understandings of others.

8 We should not ordinarily, in converse, affect or undertake to teach; for this implies a pretence to a kind of superiority, and a preferring ourselves to others in wisdom; which argueth vanity, and is offensive to those with whom we converse, who care not to be dealt with as disciples or underlings. We may with our equals modestly dispute the case upon even ground, as fellow-students of knowledge, or advocates of truth; but we must not peremptorily dictate, or pronounce with authority, like masters or judges.

9 We should indeed be cautious of interrupting any man's discourse, or of taking his words out of his mouth: for this is a rude way of dispossessing men of that which, by common law of society, they suppose themselves to enjoy, speaking their mind through, and perfecting their discourse; it is an implicit accusation of impertinency or weakness in their speech; it is an argument that we deem ourselves wiser than they, or able to speak more to the purpose: it is therefore an unsociable and distasteful practice.

10 We should be careful of intrenching upon any man's modesty in any way, either of commendation or dispraise, so as to put him to the blush, or to expose him unto scorn. Sober men care not to be the subjects of talk; no man can endure to

be the object of sport: we should not therefore thrust any man upon the stage; it is vexatious, and therefore always discourteous, sometimes very injurious. SERM.  
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11 It is good to be very staunch and cautious of talking about other men and their concernments, in way of passing characters on them, or descanting upon their proceedings, for want of other discourse: this is the common refuge of idleness, and the practice of fiddling gossips, who, because they will do nothing themselves, must be reflecting upon the doings of others; and, that they may not say nothing, will talk impertinently: Φλύαροι καὶ περίεργοι, St Paul well coupleth together, that is, frivolous tattlers and busybodies; *And withal*, saith 1 Tim. v.  
13. he of such gossiping women, *they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house<sup>h</sup>; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.* To affect talking about others is indeed a great temptation to speaking things which we ought not to speak, words of unjust and uncharitable obloquy<sup>1</sup>.

12 Further; we should not be inquisitive into the designs of men<sup>k</sup>; for this, beside the vain curiosity and impertinency of so doing, is to assail their modesty, and an adventure to vex both them and ourselves: thy neighbour, perhaps, as most advised men are, is desirous to keep his purpose close to himself<sup>1</sup>; then by inquiry thou either

<sup>h</sup> Nec quid agatur in alia, domus alia per te noverit.—Hier. [Ep. xxxiv. ad Nepot. Opp. Tom. iv. p. ii. col. 265.]

<sup>1</sup> Vid. Chrys. in Hebr. Orat. xxi. [Opp. Tom. iv. p. 540.]

<sup>k</sup> Ἔστι γὰρ ἡ πολυπραγμοσύνη φιλοπευστία τῶν ἐν ἀποκρύψει καὶ λανθανόντων.—[Plut. de Curios. Opp. Tom. viii. p. 58. Ed. Reiske.]

<sup>1</sup> Percontatorem fugito.

[Hor. Ep. i. 18, 69.]

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forcest him unwillingly to disclose what he would not, or to give thee a repulse, which he liketh not to do; and which, whenever he doth, he is displeased: what is pumped out comes up against nature, and bringeth regret with it; and if we cannot get any thing out, we yet cause disturbance within; and ourselves are not well satisfied in the disappointment.

13 We should not press into the retirements of men; to do so is not only immodest and rude, but unjust: it is immodest to desire to know from any man what he is ashamed or unwilling to shew<sup>m</sup>: it is rude to disturb any man in the enjoyment of his lawful freedom, to interrupt him in his conversation with himself, to obstruct his private satisfactions: it is unjust to bereave a man of that leisure and opportunity which he possesseth, of doing that which he best liketh, and perhaps is greatly concerned in; of enjoying his own thoughts, of meditating upon his concerns, of examining his ways, of composing his passions, of studying truth, of devotion and intercourse with his God, of contriving and carrying on, in anywise, the welfare of his own soul. Why doth he retire, but to shun diversion, or that he may be master of his time and thoughts? Why then are we so unkind, or so unjust, as to deprive him of those contents and advantages?

14 We should not pry or peep into men's secrets; it is a practice upon many accounts blameable.

<sup>m</sup> Arcanum neque tu scrutaberis illius unquam:  
Commissumque teges, et vino tortus et ira.

[Hor. Ep. I. 18, 37.]

It is commonly impertinent curiosity: for men hide things, because they do not think others concerned to know them; the concealment argueth their opinion to be such, and consequently, that he is fondly curious who would search into them: *Why*, said he well to one, who, seeing him carry a basket covered, did ask what was in it, *dost thou seek to know, when thou seest it covered, that thou mayest not know<sup>a</sup>?*

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It is foully discourteous, because offensively depriving men of the satisfaction they take in concealing their matters; encroaching upon the innocent freedoms which they would enjoy, without rendering account to any; trespassing upon their bashfulness, or frustrating their discretion; for therefore men choose to keep things close, because they like not, or judge it not expedient, to declare them. *Take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee.*

Eccles. vii.  
21.

It is also grossly injurious to deal thus; for it is a robbery of what is most dear to men; which they with more care reserve and guard, than they do their gold or their jewels: so that to break open the closet of a man's breast, to ransack his mind, to pilfer away his thoughts, his affections, his purposes, may well be deemed a worse sort of burglary or theft, than to break open doors, to rifle trunks, or to pick pockets.

It is a practice in the common opinion of men worthily esteemed very dishonest and treacherous; for men generally do suppose each other to be under a tacit, but well-understood compact, obliged

<sup>a</sup> Τὸ τοῦ Αἰγυπτίου χάριεν, πρὸς τὸν ἐρωτῶντα τί φέρει συγκεκαλυμμένον, Διὰ τοῦτο συγκεκάλυπται.—Plut. περὶ πολυπρ. [Opp. Tom. II. p. 916. Ed. Steph.]

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mutually (as they tender greatly the retaining their own secrets, so) to abstain from attempting to discover the secrets of others; to do otherwise is therefore taken for an act of perfidious enmity, and a violation of mutual confidence.

In fine, to peep into chinks, to listen at doors or windows, to mind whispers, to dive into letters and papers, and the like practices, are the practices of insidious eves-droppers, spies, and sycophants, which common humanity will not endure.

Yea, if the knowledge of what our neighbour would conceal doth casually arrive to us, it is advisable to smother it, it is inhumanity to reveal it to his prejudice°. To reveal secrets is a practice condemned in scripture as odious and base. *He that goeth about as a talebearer, revealeth secrets.*  
 Prov. xx. 19.  
*A talebearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.*  
 xi. 13.

A wise man would not willingly anywise know the secrets of others, but gladly would shun them, although offering themselves to his knowledge; that he may be freed from the burden of keeping them, and the danger of venting them, to the distaste, wrong, or prejudice of others; and he is commended for his discretion, who, to a prince asking him, *What of his he should impart to him?* replied, *Whatever you please, except your secrets*<sup>p</sup>. Them he well thought unsafe to keep, and dangerous to utter. How foolish then is it voluntarily to intrude, or carefully to search into them!

° Not to take up, or scatter reports prejudicial. Μηδέποτε δευτερώσης λόγον—Ἀκήκοας λόγον, συναποθανέτω σοι. Eccles. xix. 7, 10.

<sup>p</sup> [Διὸ καλῶς Φιλιππίδης ὁ κωμφοδοποιὸς, εἰπόντος αὐτῷ ποτε Λυσιμάχου τοῦ βασιλέως, Τίνος σοι τῶν ἐμῶν μεταδῶ; Μόνον (εἶπεν) ὁ βασιλεὺς μὴ τῶν ἀπορρήτων.—Plut. de Curios. Opp. Tom. ii. p. 917. Ed. Steph.]

15 We should not lie in wait to surprise or catch any man at advantage, to overthrow him when he trips, to insult upon his mistake or his disaster; to do thus is always ill manners, it is sometimes barbarous inhumanity. Goodness, in such cases, would dispose a man to support, relieve, and comfort another, if he demandeth, or his case needeth such meddling.

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16 Lastly; we should never, at least with much earnestness, meddle with affairs more properly belonging to others, and which we do not, or may not handsomely pretend to understand so well as others: such are affairs beside our profession, which if we understand not, it is a folly, in a peremptory manner, to treat of them; if we do understand them, it is yet undecent to contest or dictate about them, in the presence at least of those who profess them: thus should private men beware, at least in that magisterial or eager way, to meddle with political affairs, illiterate men with scholastical, laymen with theological, unexperienced men with any such matters, the comprehension whereof dependeth upon skill and exercise: no man should be forward to meddle with things extraneous to his way and calling: doing so is wont to create much offence, it hath usually much immodesty and much folly in it; often it containeth much injustice.

These are some more general rules concerning the matter in hand: I should now, if time did permit, insist upon some particular kinds of meddling, advice, reproof, interposing in contests; but, in regard to your patience, I shall proceed no further at present.

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## SERMON XXIV.

### OF QUIETNESS, AND DOING OUR OWN BUSINESS.

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I THESS. IV. 11.

*And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business.*

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IN a former discourse upon these words, I have already shewed,

I. In what cases it is allowable or commendable to meddle with the affairs of others.

II. Next, I propounded some general rules concerning this matter, according to which we may discern, in what cases meddling with the affairs of others is commonly blameable. Thus far I have proceeded.

III. I shall now give some directions concerning particular kinds of meddling. And because they are many, I shall at present only insist upon three; (referring others to other occasions:) they are, advice, reproof, interposing in contests and contentions.

I. As to meddling in advice, we may do well to observe these directions.

I Advise not (except upon call) a superior, or one more eminent than thyself in authority, in dignity, or in age: for he that offereth to advise, doth thereby claim to himself a kind of superiority,

or excellence, above another; and it is not well consistent with the reverence and respect due to our betters to seem to do so. They should be wiser than we; at least it becometh us not to declare we think they are not. If they ask advice, we may without presumption give it, supposing it to be not so much their defect of knowledge as prudent caution, which maketh them willing to hear what any man can say to the case: but to obtrude it on them argueth we think them to need it, and ourselves able to direct them; which is presumption, and will pass for arrogance.

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2 We should not indeed, with any violence or importunity, thrust advice upon our equals, or upon any man not subject to our charge, who is unwilling to receive it; for this is also an exalting ourselves in skill and wisdom above him, and implieth a contemptuous opinion concerning his knowledge; that he is so weak as to need advice, and yet more weak in not seeking it when needful from us; which practice consisteth not with modesty, and needs must breed offence: it is indeed unjust; for every man of right is to be allowed to act by his own advice, and to choose his own counsellors.

3 Be not obstinate in pressing advice: if he that asketh thy counsel do not like it, desist from urging further, and rest content. If thou hast performed the part of a faithful friend, of a good man, of a charitable Christian, in advising what seemeth best to thee, that may abundantly satisfy thee; for the rest, *ipse viderit*, it is his concernment more than thine: if thou pretendest that he must follow thy advice, or art displeased because

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he doth not so, thou makest thyself a commander, not a counsellor; the which to appoint thee was beside his intention; he meant to seek thy help, not to forfeit his own liberty; and thou art not just in pretending to so much.

4 Affect not to be a counsellor, nor let any considerations, except of friendship, humanity, or charity, easily dispose thee to accept the office: it is not worth the while to undertake it as a matter of reputation, or because it seemeth to argue a good opinion concerning thy skill and ability; for it is a critical and dangerous thing to advise, because if the business succeedeth well according to thy advice, the principal usually carrieth away the profit and the praise; his judgment, his industry, his fortune are applauded; little commendation or benefit accrueth to the counsellor: but if it prosper not, the main weight of blame is surely laid upon him that advised the course. If you, saith the party, and say the lookers on, had not thus directed, it had not thus fallen out.

5 Wherefore it is commonly expedient not to advise, otherwise than with reservation and diffidence: it is, we may say, the most probable course I know, but I question whether it will succeed; I hope well of it, but do not thoroughly confide therein. This modest and discreet way, whatever the event shall be, will shelter thee from blame; yea, will advance the reputation of thy sagacity: for if it fail, thy reason to suspect will be approved; if it prosper, the goodness of thy judgment will be applauded: whereas the confident director, if success crosseth his advice, is exclaimed upon for his rashness; if success favoureth, he is not yet

admired for his wisdom, because he seemed to be sure ; it being more admirable to guess the best among doubtful things, than to determine that which is certain. So much for meddling about advice.

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II. For reproof, (which is necessary, and a duty upon some occasions,) we may do well to follow these directions.

Levit. xix.  
17.  
Ephes. v.  
11.

1 Reprove not a superior ; for it is exercising a power over him, and punishing him ; we thereby therefore do soar above our pitch, we confound ranks, and pervert the order settled among men ; the practice containeth irreverence and presumption, it seemeth injurious, and is ever odious. What the ministers of God, or spiritual pastors, do in this kind, they do it by special commission, or instinct, (as the prophets in reprehending princes and priests, as St John Baptist in reproofing Herod ;) or as ordinary superiors in the case of spiritual guidance, being set over us for that purpose, and watching for our souls, for which they must render an account : yet they must do it with great moderation and discretion : Πρεσβυτέρῳ μὴ ἐπιπλήξῃς, *Rebuke not an elder*, (or one more aged than thyself,) *but intreat him as a father*, (that is, advise him in the most respectful and gentle manner,) is the charge of St Paul to B. Timothy. In case of grievance or scandal, it becometh inferiors not proudly or peremptorily to criminate and tax, but humbly to remonstrate and supplicate for redress.

Heb. xiii.  
17.

1 Tim. v.  
1.

2 Reprove not rashly, and without certain cognizance of the fact ; for to reprove for things not done, or, which in moral reckoning is the same, for

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things not apparent, is both unjust, and argueth a malignant disposition: it is unjust to punish so much as the modesty of any man, without clear evidence and proof; it is malignity to suspect a man of ill, it is calumny to charge blame on him upon slender pretences, or doubtful surmises.

3 Reprove not also rashly as to the point of right, or without being able to convince the matter to be assuredly culpable: to reprove for things not bad, or not unquestionably such, for things that are, or perhaps may be indifferent and innocent, is also unjust, and signifieth a tyrannical disposition: it is unjust anywise to punish a man without clear warrant of law; it is tyrannical to impose upon men our conceit, or to persecute them for using their liberty, following their judgment, or enjoying their humour; which in effect we do, when we reprove them for that which we cannot prove blameable: it is, St James saith, a judging the law, or charging it with defect, when we condemn persons for things not prohibited by it: *He, saith the apostle, that speaketh against his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law.*

James iv.  
11.

Both these kinds of rash reproof are very inconvenient, as breeding needless offence and endless contention; for whoever is thus taxed will certainly take it ill, and will contend in his own defence: no man patiently, for no sufficient cause or sure ground, will lie under the stroke of reproof, which always smarteth, but then enrageth, when it is supposed to be inflicted unjustly or maliciously: even those who contentedly will bear friendly reproof, can worse brook to be causelessly taxed.

4 Reprove not for slight matters; for such faults or defects as proceed from natural frailty, from inadvertency, from mistake in matters of small consequence; for it is hard to be just in such reproof; or so to temper it as not to exceed the measure of blame due to such faults<sup>a</sup>: they occur so often, that we should never cease to be carping, if we do it upon such occasions; it is not worth the while, it is not handsome to seem displeased with such little things; it is spending our artillery upon a game not worth the killing. Reproof is too grave and stately a thing to be prostituted upon so mean things; to use it upon small cause derogateth from its weight, when there is considerable reason for it; friendship, charity, and humanity should cover such offences. In fine, it is unseemly to reprove men for such things as all men, as themselves, are so continually subject unto: it is therefore better to let such things pass without any mark of displeasure or dislike.

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5 Reprove not unseasonably; not when a person is indisposed to bear reproof, or unfit to profit thereby; not when there is likely to be no good effect come from it; when thou shalt only thereby conjure up an evil spirit of displeasure and enmity against thyself. Reproof is a thing of itself not good or pleasant, but sometimes needful, because wholesome and good in order to the end; it should therefore be administered as physic, then only when the patient is fit to receive it, and it may serve to correct his distemper; otherwise you will only make him more sick, and very angry.

<sup>a</sup> Mitem animum, et mores modicis erroribus æquos.

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Prov. ix. 7,  
8; xv. 12.

Matt. vii. 6.

It is ever almost unseasonable to reprove some persons, as scorers, impudent, incorrigibly profligate persons, who will hate the reprover without regarding the reproof: *He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame; and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee.* To be maligned, to be derided, to be aspersed with reproach and slander, is all one shall get by reprovng such persons; it is both prostituting good advice, and exposing oneself to mischief, as our Saviour intimateth in that prohibition: *Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.*

As such men ever, so most men in some seasons, are incapable of reproof; so are men in calamity, who are discomposed by grief, the which is rather to be mitigated by comfort, than increased and exasperated by blame; so are men in a passion, who have no ears to hear, no reason to judge, no will to comply with advice: reproof is apt to produce rather anger and ill-blood, than any contrition or kindly remorse in persons so affected.

It is also usually not seasonable to reprove men publicly, when their modesty is highly put to it, and their reputation grievously suffereth; for this is an extreme sort of punishment, and is taken for needless; it is extreme, because men had rather suffer any way than in their honour; it is deemed needless, because it may be ministered privately.

6 Reprove mildly and sweetly, in the calmest manner, in the gentlest terms; not in a haughty

or imperious way, not hastily or fiercely; not with sour looks, or in bitter language; for these ways do beget all the evil, and hinder the best effects of reproof: they do certainly inflame and disturb the person reprov'd; they breed wrath, disdain, and hatred against the reprover; but do not so well enlighten the man to see his error, or affect him with kindly sense of his miscarriage, or dispose him to correct his fault: such reproofs look rather like the wounds and persecutions of enmity, than as remedies ministered by a friendly hand; they harden men with stomach who scorn to mend upon such occasion. If reproof doth not savour of humanity, it signifieth nothing; it must be like a bitter pill wrapt in gold, and tempered with sugar, otherwise it will not go down, or work effectually.

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7 Affect not to be reprehensive; seem not willingly to undertake the place of a reprover; appear to be merely drawn thereto by sense of duty, or exigency of friendship, or constraint of charity and good-will. For to affect reproving is a sign of ill-nature and arrogance, that we delight to observe the faults, that we love to insult upon the infirmities and infelicities of other men; which is the part of a domineering and cruel humour. A truly good man indeed would be glad to be excused from the office; it is the most unpleasant thing he can do to be raking in men's sores, and causing smart to his neighbours; far more gladly would he be commending their good deeds, and cherishing their virtue. Nothing therefore but conscience and charity can put him on this employment. But so much for meddling in reproof.



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III. Another kind of meddling is, interposing in the contests and contentions of others. As to this, we may, briefly, do well to observe these directions.

1 We should never meddle, so as to raise dissensions, or to do such things as breed them: we should by no means create misunderstandings, or distastes, between our neighbours: we should not instil jealousies, or surmises: we should not misconstrue words or actions, to an offensive sense or consequence: we should not convey spiteful tales: we should not disclose the secrets of one to another. These practices engender enmity and strife among men; and are therefore inhuman, or rather diabolical; for the Devil is the great makebate in the world.

2 We should not foment dissensions already commenced, blowing up the coals that are kindled, by abetting the strife, or aggravating the causes thereof; it is not good to strengthen the quarrel, by siding with one part, except that part be notoriously oppressed or abused: in such a case indeed, when justice calleth for them, we may lend our advice and assistance; and may bear the inconvenience of being engaged, as Moses honestly and generously did, when he succoured his brother that suffered wrong; otherwise it is advisable to keep ourselves out of the fray, that we do not encourage it by our taking part, and involve ourselves in the mischiefs of it.

3 Especially we should not make ourselves parties in any faction, where both sides are eager and passionate; for then, even they who have the juster cause are wont to do unjust things, in which

it is hard for any man engaged not to have share, SERM. XXIV.  
 at least not to undergo the imputation of them: it  
 is wisdom therefore in such cases to hold off, and  
 to retain a kind of indifferency; to meddle with  
 them is, as the Wise Man saith, *To take a dog by* Prov. xxvi. 17.  
*the ears;* which he that doth, can hardly take care  
 enough of his fingers.

4 We should not interpose ourselves (without  
 invitation) to be arbitrators in points of difference:  
 we may cautiously mediate perhaps, or advise to  
 agreement; but not pretend as judges with author-  
 ity to decide the controversy: this savoureth of  
 arrogance, this will work trouble to us, and bring  
 the displeasure of both sides upon us<sup>b</sup>; it is hard, in  
 doing so, to avoid becoming parties, and offending  
 one side. Our Lord therefore did, we see, wave  
 this office, and put off the invitation with a, *Who* Luke xii. 14.  
*made me a divider or a judge between you?*

5 If we would at all meddle in these cases, it  
 should be only in endeavouring, by the most fair  
 and prudent means, to renew peace, and reconcile  
 the dissenters; if we can by exhortation and per-  
 suasion to peace, by removing misprisions, by repre-  
 senting things handsomely, by mitigating their  
 passions, bring them to good terms, this is a laud-  
 able meddling, this is a blessed practice. So I  
 leave this particular, and finish the directive part  
 of my discourse.

IV. I shall now further only briefly propose  
 some considerations inducing to quietness, and  
 dissuasive from pragmaticalness; such as arise  
 from the nature, properties, causes, and effects of

<sup>b</sup> Ἀπωθούνται τὸν μέσον οἱ ἄκροι, ἑκάτερος πρὸς ἑκάτερον.—Arist.  
 [Eth. ii. 8. 3.]

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each; serving to commend the one, and disparage the other.

1 Consider that quietness is just and equal, pragmaticalness is injurious. When we contain ourselves quiet, and mind only our own business, we allow every man his right, we harm no man's repute; we keep ourselves within our bounds, and trespass not on the place or interest of our neighbour; we disturb not the right order and course of things: but, in being pragmatical, we do wrongfully deprive others of their right and liberty to manage their business; we prejudice their credit, implicitly charging them with weakness and incapacity to despatch their affairs without our direction; we therefore, upon our own unequal and partial judgment, do prefer and advance ourselves above them; we assume to ourselves in many respects more than our due, withdrawing it from others. In fine, no man loveth that others should invade his office, or intrude into his business; therefore in justice every man should forbear doing so toward others.

2 Quietness signifieth humility, modesty, and sobriety of mind; that we conceit not ourselves more wise than our neighbour; that we allow every man his share of discretion; that we take others for able and skilful enough to understand and manage their own affairs: but pragmaticalness argueth much overweening and arrogance; that we take ourselves for the only men of wisdom, at least for more wise than those into whose business we thrust ourselves.

3 Quietness is beneficial to the world, preserving the general order of things, disposing men to

keep within their rank and station, and within the sphere of their power and ability, regularly attending to the work and business proper to them; whereby as themselves do well, so the public doth thrive: but pragmaticalness disturbeth the world, confounding things, removing the distinction between superior, inferior, and equal, rendering each man's business uncertain; while some undertake that which belongeth not to them: one busybody often, as we find by experience, is able to disturb and pester a whole society.

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4 Quietness preserveth concord and amity: for no man is thereby provoked, being suffered undisturbedly to proceed in his course, according to his mind and pleasure: but pragmaticalness breedeth dissensions and feuds: for all men are ready to quarrel with those who offer to control them, or cross them in their way; every man will be zealous in maintaining his privilege of choosing, and acting according to his choice; and cannot but oppose those, who attempt to bereave him of it; whence between the busybody assailing, and others defending their liberty, combustions must arise.

5 Quietness, to the person endued with it, or practising it, begetteth tranquillity and peace; for he that letteth others alone, and cometh in no man's way, no man will be apt to disquiet or cross him; he keepeth himself out of broils and factions: but the busybody createth vexation and trouble to himself; others will be ready to molest him in his proceedings, because he disturbeth them in theirs: he that will have a sickle in another's corn, or an oar in every man's boat, no wonder if his fingers

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1 Pet. iv.  
15.

Prov. xxvi.  
17.

be rapped; men do not more naturally brush off flies, which buzz about their ears, sit upon their faces or hands, and sting or tickle them, than they strive to drive away clamorous and encroaching busybodies. *Let, saith St Peter, none of you suffer as a busybody in other men's matters; it is, he intimateth, a practice whereby a man becometh liable to suffer, or which men are apt to punish soundly: and so the Wise Man, implying the fondness and danger of it, He, saith he, that passeth by, and meddleth with strife not belonging to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears; that is, without any probable good effect, he provoketh a creature that will snarl at him and bite him.*

6 Quietness is a decent and lovely thing, as signifying good disposition, and producing good effects; but pragmaticalness is ugly and odious. Every man gladly would be a neighbour to a quiet person, as who, by the steady calmness and smoothness of his humour, the inoffensive stillness and sweetness of his demeanour, doth afford all the pleasure of conversation, without any cross or trouble. But no man willingly would dwell by him, who is apt ever to be infesting him by his turbulent humour, his obstreperous talk, his tumultuous and furious carriage; who, upon all occasions, without invitation or consent, will be thrusting in his eyes, his tongue, his hand; prying into all that is done, dictating this or that course, taxing all proceeding, usurping a kind of jurisdiction over him and his actions: no man will like, or can well endure such a neighbour. It is commonly observed, that pride is not only abominable to God, but loathsome to man; and of all prides, this is the

most offensive and odious: for the pride which keepeth at home, within a man's heart or fancy, not issuing forth to trouble others, may indeed well be despised, as hugely silly and vain; but that, which breaketh out to the disturbance and vexation of others, is hated as molestful and mischievous.

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7 Quietness adorneth any profession, bringing credit, respect, and love thereto; but pragmatism is scandalous, and procureth odium to any party or cause: men usually do cloak their pragmatical behaviour with pretences of zeal for public good, or of kindness to some party, which they have espoused; but thereby they do really cast reproach, and draw prejudice upon their side: if it be a good cause, they do thereby wrong it, making it to partake of the blame incident to such carriage, as if it did produce or allow disorder; if it be a bad cause, they wrong themselves, aggravating the guilt of their adherence thereto; for it is a less fault to be calm and remiss in an ill way, than busy or violent in promoting it. Nothing hath wrought more prejudice to religion, or hath brought more disparagement upon truth, than boisterous and unseasonable zeal; pretending in ways of passion, of fierceness, of rudeness to advance them: a quiet sectary doth, to most men's fancy, appear more lovely, than he that is furiously and factiously orthodox: *The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit* 1 Pet. iii. 4. is, saith St Peter, *in God's sight, of great price*; and it is also very estimable in the opinion of men.

8 Quiet is a safe practice<sup>c</sup>, keeping men not

<sup>c</sup> Τῷ γὰρ ὄντι φαίνεται ὁ κατὰ τὴν ἡσυχίαν βίος ἀκίνδυνόν τι καὶ ἀσφαλὲς ἔχειν.—Chrysippus apud Plut. [de Stoic. Repug. Opp. Tom. III. p. 1916. Ed. Steph.]

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only from needless incumbrances of business, but from the hazards of it, or being charged with its bad success: but pragmaticalness is dangerous; for if things go ill, the meddler surely will be loaded with the blame; the profit and commendation of prosperities will accrue to the persons immediately concerned; but the disaster and damage will be imputed to those who meddled in the business; to excuse or ease themselves, men will cast the disgrace on those who did project or further the undertaking: he therefore that would be secure, let him be quiet; he that loveth peril and trouble, let him be pragmatical.

9 It is consequently a great point of discretion to be quiet, it yielding a man peace and safety without any trouble; and it is a manifest folly to be pragmatical, it being only with care, pains, and trouble, to seek dissatisfaction to others, and danger to himself; it being also to affect many not only inconveniences, but impossibilities.

Is it possible for any man to grasp or compass an infinity of business? Yet this the pragmatical man seemeth to drive at; for the businesses of other men are infinite, and into that abyss he plungeth himself, who passeth beyond his own bounds; by the same reason that he meddleth with any beside his own, he may undertake all the affairs in the world; so he is sure to have work enough, but fruit surely little enough of his pains.

Is it imaginable that we can easily bring others to our bent, or induce men to submit their business to our judgment and humour? Will not he that attempteth such things assuredly expose himself to disappointment and regret? Is it not therefore

wisdom to let every man have his own way, and pursue his concernments without any check or control from us ?

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10 We may also consider, that every man hath business of his own sufficient to employ him<sup>d</sup>; to exercise his mind, to exhaust his care and pains, to take up all his time and leisure. To study his own near concernments, to provide for the necessities and conveniences of his life, to look to the interests of his soul, to be diligent in his calling, to discharge faithfully and carefully all his duties relating to God and man, will abundantly employ a man<sup>e</sup>; well it is, if some of them do not encumber and distract him: he that will set himself with all his might to perform these things, will find enough to do; he need not seek further for work, he need not draw more trouble on him.

Seeing then every man hath burden enough on his shoulders, imposed by God and nature, it is vain to take on him more load, by engaging himself in the affairs of others; he will thence be forced, either to shake off his own business, or to become overburdened and oppressed with more than he can bear. It is indeed hence observable, and it needs must happen, that those who meddle with the business of others are wont to neglect their own; they that are much abroad can seldom be at home; they that know others most are least acquainted with themselves: and the wise Hebrew,

<sup>d</sup> Ὁ πλείστα πράσων, πλείσθ' ἁμαρτάνει βροτῶν.

[Eurip. CEnom. Frag. 1.]

<sup>e</sup> Ἀπράγμονάς τε εἶναι ἐκκλίνειν γὰρ τὸ πράττειν τι παρὰ τὸ καθήκον.—Zenon apud Diog. Laer. [vii. 1. 64.] Cf. Chrys. in Matt. Hom. LXIV. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 410.]



SERM. XXIV. *The wisdom of a learned man comes by opportunity of leisure, Σοφία γραμματέως ἐν εὐκαιρίᾳ σχολῆς, and he that hath little business shall be wise, ὁ ἐλασσούμενος πράξει αὐτοῦ σοφισθήσεται.* Whence it is scarce possible that a pragmatical man should be a good man; that is, such an one who honestly and carefully performeth the duties incumbent on him.

Ecclus. xxxviii. 24.

Philosophers therefore generally have advised men to shun needless occupations, as the certain impediments of a good and happy life; they bid us endeavour, *To simplify ourselves, Ἀπλοῦν ἑαυτοὺς*, or to get into a condition requiring of us the least that can be to do. St Paul intended the same when he advised us, *Not to be entangled in the negotiations of life, Μὴ ἐμπλέκεσθαι ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις*: and our Saviour, when he touched Luke x. 41. Martha for being troubled about many things. So far therefore we should be from taking in hand the affairs of other men, that we should labour to contract our own, and reduce them to the fewest that we can; otherwise we shall hardly attain wisdom, or be able to perform our duty<sup>1</sup>.

11 But suppose us to have much spare time, and to want business<sup>2</sup>, so that we are to seek for divertisement, and must for relief fly to curiosity; yet it is not advisable to meddle with the affairs of other men; there are divers other ways more inno-

<sup>1</sup> [Τούτων ἐν τῇ τετάρτῃ λέγει (Χρύσιππος), τὸν σοφὸν ἀπράγμονά τε εἶναι καὶ ἰδιοπράγμονα, καὶ τὰ αὐτοῦ πράττειν.—Chrysippus apud Plut. de Stoic. Repug. Opp. Tom. x. p. 313. Ed. Reisk.] Vid. Sen. Epp. lxxii. xxii.

Tertullian calleth Stoicism, Quietis magisterium.—De Pall. cap. v. [Opp. p. 118 D.].

<sup>2</sup> Tacitus saith of the Stoics' sect, Quæ turbidos et negotiorum appetentes facit.—[Annal. xiv. 57.]

cent, more safe, more pleasant, more advantageous to divert ourselves, and satisfy curiosity<sup>a</sup>.

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Nature offereth herself, and her inexhaustible store of appearances to our contemplation; we may, without any harm, and with much delight, survey her rich varieties, examine her proceedings, pierce into her secrets. Every kind of animals, of plants, of minerals, of meteors presenteth matter, wherewith innocently, pleasantly, and profitably to entertain our minds. There are many noble sciences, by applying our minds to the study whereof, we may not only divert them, but improve and cultivate them: the histories of ages past, or relations concerning foreign countries, wherein the manners of men are described, and their actions reported, may afford us useful pleasure and pastime; thereby we may learn as much, and understand the world as well, as by the most curious inquiry into the present actions of men; there we may observe, we may scan, we may tax the proceedings of whom we please, without any danger or offence: there are extant numberless books, wherein the wisest and most ingenious of men have laid open their hearts, and exposed their most secret cogitations unto us; in pursuing them we may sufficiently busy ourselves, and let our idle hours pass gratefully; we may meddle with ourselves, studying our own dispositions, examining our principles and purposes, reflecting on our thoughts, words, and actions; striving thoroughly to understand ourselves; to do this we have an unquestionable right, and by it

<sup>a</sup> Omnium quidem occupatorum conditio misera est: eorum tamen miserrima, qui ne suis quidem occupationibus laborant. — Sen. de Brev. Vitæ, xix. [2.]

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we shall obtain vast benefit, much greater than we can hope to get by puddering in the designs or doings of others. Pragmaticalness then, as it is very dangerous and troublesome, so it is perfectly needless; it is a kind of idleness, but of all idleness the most unreasonable<sup>1</sup>: it is at least worse than idleness, in St Gregory Nazianzen's opinion: for, *I had rather, said he, be idle more than I should, than over-busy*<sup>2</sup>. Other considerations might be added; but these, I hope, may be sufficient to restrain this practice, so unprofitable and uneasy to ourselves, and, for the most part, so injurious and troublesome to others.

Heb. xiii.  
20, 21.

*Now the God of peace make us perfect in every good word and work, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

<sup>1</sup> Ἄνδρὶ Λυδῷ πράγματα οὐκ ἦν ὁ δὲ ἐξελθὼν ἐπρίατο.—Adag. apud Suidam. [col. 3066 c. Ed. Gaisf.]

<sup>2</sup> Ἀργὸς εἶναι μᾶλλον τοῦ δέοντος, ἢ περιέργος δέχομαι.—Greg. Naz. [Or. xxxii. Opp. Tom. i. p. 593 B.]

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## SERMON XXV.

### OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

MATT. XXII. 37.

*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God  
with all thy heart.*

THIS text is produced by our Saviour out of SERM. XXV.  
Moses his law in answer to a question, where-  
with a learned Pharisee thought to pose or puzzle Dent. vi. 5; x. 12.  
him; the question was, *Which was the great and  
first commandment in the Law?* a question which,  
it seems, had been examined, and determined  
among the doctors, in the schools of those days,  
(for in St Luke, to the like question intimated Luke x. 28.  
by our Saviour, another lawyer readily yields  
the same answer, and is therefore commended by  
our Saviour with a, *Recte respondisti, Thou hast  
answered rightly;*) so that, had our Saviour an-  
swered otherwise, he had, we may suppose, been  
taxed of ignorance and unskilfulness, perhaps also  
of error and heterodoxy; to convict him of which  
seems to have been the design of this Jewish trier  
or tempter, (for he is said to ask, *Trying, or  
tempting, him, Πειράζων αὐτόν*). But our Saviour  
defeats his captious intent, by answering, not only  
according to truth and the reason of the thing, but  
agreeably to the doctrine then current, and as the  
lawyer himself, out of his memory and learning,

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would have resolved it: and no wonder, since common sense dictates, that the law enjoining sincere and entire love toward God is necessarily the first and chief, or the most fundamental law of all Religion; for that whosoever doth believe the being of God, according to the most common notion that name bears, must needs discern himself obliged, first and chiefly, to perform those acts of mind and will toward him, which most true and earnest love do imply: different expressions of love may be prescribed, peculiar grounds of love may be declared in several ways of Religion; but in the general and main substance of the duty all will conspire, all will acknowledge readily, that it is love we chiefly owe to God; the duty which he may most justly require of us, and which will be most acceptable to him. It was then indeed the great commandment of the old (or rather of the young and less perfect) Religion of the Jews, and it is no less of the more adult and improved Religion which the Son of God did institute and teach: the difference only is, that Christianity declares more fully how we should exercise it; and more highly engages us to observe it; requires more proper and more substantial expressions thereof; extends our obligation as to the matter, and intends it as to the degree thereof: for, as it represents Almighty God in his nature and in his doings, more lovely than any other way of Religion, either natural or instituted, hath done, or could do; so it proportionably raises our obligation to love him: it is, as St Paul speaketh, Τὸ τέλος τῆς παραγγελίας, *The last drift*, or the supreme pitch of the evangelical profession and institution, to love; to love God first, and then our neighbour, *Out of a*

1 Tim. i.  
5.

*pure heart, and good conscience, and faith unfeigned:* SERM. XXV.  
 it is, *The bond, or knot of that perfection* which Col. iii. 14.  
 the Gospel enjoins us to aspire to: it is the first Matt. v.  
 and principal of those goodly fruits, which the 48.  
 Holy Spirit of Christ produceth in good Christians. Gal. v. 22.  
 It is therefore plainly with us also the great com-  
 mandment and chief duty; chiefly great in its  
 extent, in its worth, in its efficacy, and influence:  
 most great it is, in that it doth (eminently at least,  
 or virtually) contain all other laws and duties of  
 piety; they being all as branches making up its body,  
 or growing out of it as their root. St Paul saith Rom. xiii.  
 of the love toward our neighbour, that it is, Πλήρωμα 10.  
 νόμου, *A full performance of the laws* concerning him;  
 and that, *All commandments, ἀνακεφαλαιοῦνται, are* Rom. xiii.  
*recapitulated, or summed up, in this one saying, Thou* Gal. v. 14.  
*shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:* and by like, or  
 greater reason, are all the duties of piety comprised  
 in the love of God; which is the chief of those two  
 hinges, upon which, as our Saviour here subjoins,  
*The whole law and the prophets do hang.* So great Matt. xxii.  
 is this duty in extent: and it is no less in proper 40.  
 worth; both as it immediately respects the most  
 excellent and most necessary performances of duty,  
 (employing our highest faculties in their best opera-  
 tions,) and as it imparts virtue and value to all  
 other acts of duty: for no sacrifice is acceptable, Lev. ii. 13;  
 which is not kindled by this heavenly fire; no ix. 24.  
 offering sweet and pure, which is not seasoned by  
 this holy salt; no action is truly good or commend-  
 able, which is not conjoined with, or doth not  
 proceed from the love of God; that is not performed  
 with a design to please God, or, at least, with an  
 opinion that we shall do so thereby. If a man

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perform any good work not out of love to God, but from any other principle, or for any other design, (to please himself or others, to get honour or gain thereby,) how can it be acceptable to God, to whom it hath not any due regard? And what action hath it for its principle, or its ingredient, becomes sanctified thereby, in great measure pleasing and acceptable to God; such is the worth and value thereof. It is also the great commandment for efficacy and influence, being naturally productive of obedience to all other commandments; especially of the most genuine and sincere obedience; no other principle being in force and activity comparable thereto: (fear may drive to a compliance with some, and hope may draw to an observance of others; but it is love, that with a kind of willing constraint and kindly violence carries on cheerfully, vigorously, and swiftly to the performance of all God's commandments: *If any man loves me, saith our Saviour, he will keep my word*: to keep his word is a natural and necessary result of love to him: *This is the love of God*, saith St John, *that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous*; it is the nature of that love to beget a free and delightful obedience:) such then is the subject of our discourse; even the sum, the soul, the spring of all our Religion and duty. And because it is requisite, both for our direction how to do, and the examination of ourselves whether we do as we ought, that we should understand what we are so far obliged to; that we may be able to perform it, and that we be effectually disposed thereto, I shall use this method; I will first endeavour to explain the nature of this love commanded us; then, to

2 Cor. v.  
14.

John xiv.

23.  
1 John ii.

5.  
1 John v.

3.

shew some means of attaining it; lastly, to propound some inducements to the purchase and practice thereof. SERM.  
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I. For the first part; we may describe love in general (for it seems not so easy to define it exactly) to be an affection or inclination of the soul toward an object, proceeding from an apprehension and esteem of some excellency or some conveniency therein, (its beauty, worth, or usefulness,) producing thereupon, if the object be absent or wanting, a proportionable desire, and consequently an endeavour to obtain such a propriety therein, such a possession thereof, such an approximation or union thereto, as the thing is capable of; also a regret and displeasure in the failing so to obtain it; or in the want, absence, and loss thereof; likewise begetting a complacence, satisfaction, and delight in its presence, possession, or enjoyment; which is moreover attended with a good-will thereto, suitable to its nature; that is, with a desire that it should arrive unto, and continue in its best state; with a delight to perceive it so to thrive and flourish; with a displeasure to see it suffer or decay in anywise; with a consequent endeavour to advance it in all good, and preserve it from all evil. Which description containing the chief properties of love in common, do in some sort, (not to insist upon abstracted notions, or in examples remote from our purpose,) all of them well agree to that love which we owe to God, according to the tenor of this law, and in the degree therein expressed; that is, in the best manner and highest degree; for even of this divine love the chief properties (prerequisite thereto, or intimately conjoined



SERM. XXV. therewith, or naturally resulting from it) I conceive are these:

I A right apprehension and firm persuasion concerning God, and consequently a high esteem of him as most excellent in himself and most beneficial to us: for such is the frame of our soul, that the perceptive part doth always go before the appetitive, that affection follows opinion, that no object otherwise moves our desire, than as represented by reason, or by fancy, good unto us: what effect will the goodliest beauty, or the sweetest harmony have upon him, who wants sense to discern, or judgment to prize them? (The most excellent and useful things are often neglected, because they are not well understood or not truly valued; the Wise Man gives us an instance; *Fools*, Prov. i. 7, 22. saith he, *hate wisdom, and despise knowledge*; they hate it, because they despise it, not discerning its great worth, not rightly judging of its use.) This is our natural way of acting; and according to it, that we may in due measure love God, he must appear proportionably amiable, and desirable to us; we must entertain worthy thoughts of him, as full of all perfection in himself; as the fountain of all good; as the sole author of all that happiness we can hope for or receive; as he, in possession of whom we shall possess all things desirable; in effect and virtue, all riches, all honours, all pleasure, all good that we are capable of; and secluding whom we can enjoy no real good or true content: which esteem of him, how can it otherwise than beget affection toward him? If the faint resemblances, or the slender participations of such excellences (of that incomprehensible wisdom, that uncon-

trollable power, that unconfined bounty, that unblemished purity, which are united in him, and shine from him with a perfect lustre; if, I say, the very faint resemblances, and imperfect participations of these excellences) discerned in other things, are apt to raise our admiration, and allure our affection toward them; if the glimmering of some small inconsiderable benefit, the shadow of real profit discovered in these inferior empty things, is able so strongly to attract our eyes, and fix our hearts upon them, why should not from a like, but so much greater cause, the like effect proceed? whence can it be that the apprehension of an object so infinitely lovely, so incomparably beneficial (if not passing cursorily through our fancy, but deeply impressed upon our mind) should not proportionably affect and incline us toward him with all that desire, that delight, that good-will which are proper to love? If we think, as the Psalmist did, that, *There is none in heaven or in earth comparable to God*, (comparable in essential perfection, comparable in beneficial influence,) why should we not be disposed also to say with him? *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.* Such a reverent esteem is the proper foundation upon which true love is built, and which upholds it: whence, as the love of God doth commonly denote all the duties of Religion; so doth fear, (or reverence to him) likewise in scripture style comprehend and express them all; it being the root from whence love doth sprout, and by which it is nourished: it being the beginning of that true wisdom by which we embrace and fasten our

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Ps. lxxxix.  
6.

Ps. lxxiii.  
25.

Comp.  
Ps. xxxi.  
23;  
xxxiv. 9;  
cxlv. 19,  
20.

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Ps. cxlvi.  
2;  
civ. 33;  
xxxiv. 1;  
lxxi. 15;  
cxlv. 2;  
xxxv. 28;  
lxxi. 8.

affection upon the sovereign good. Hence we may observe, that those devout persons, whose hearts were fullest of this love, their minds were most employed in meditation upon the divine excellences, and upon the beneficial emanations from them in bounty and mercy upon the creatures; their tongues being tuned by their thoughts, and their inward esteem breaking forth into praise. Every day, all the day long, at all times did they bless God, praise his name, speak of his righteousness, shew forth his salvation, as the Psalmist expresses his practice, arising from love enlivened by the esteem of God, and the apprehension of his excellent goodness: from whence also that strong faith, that constant hope, that cheerful confidence they reposed in him; that hearty approbation of all his counsels and purposes; that full acquiescence of mind in his proceedings; that entire submission of their understanding to his discipline, and resignation of their will to his good pleasure; that yielding up themselves (their souls and bodies, their lives and goods) to his disposal, with all the like high effects and pregnant signs of love did flow: but,

2 Another property of this love is an earnest desire of obtaining a propriety in God; of possessing him, in a manner, and enjoying him; of approaching him, and being, so far as may be, united to him. When we stand upon such terms with any person, that we have a free access unto and a familiar intercourse with him; that his conversation is profitable and delightful to us; that we can upon all occasions have his advice and assistance; that he is always ready in our needs, and at our desire, to

employ what is in him of ability for our good and advantage, we may be said to own such a person, to possess and enjoy him; to be tied, as it were, and joined to him, (as it is said, *The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, so that he loved him as his own soul*). And such a propriety in, such a possession of, such an alliance and conjunction to himself, God vouchsafes to them, who are duly qualified for so great a good. *He was not ashamed*, saith the apostle concerning the faithful patriarchs, *to be called their God*; to be appropriated in a manner unto them; and, *He that acknowledgeth the Son*, saith St John concerning good Christians, *hath* (or possesseth) *the Father also*, *Kaì τὸν πατέρα ἔχει*: and *To seek*; *To find*; *To draw near to*; *To cleave unto*; *To abide with*, *To abide in*; and such other phrases frequently do occur in scripture, denoting that near relation which good men stand in toward God; implying, that he affords them a continual liberty of access and coming into his especial presence, that he admits them to a kind of converse and communion with himself, full of spiritual benefit and delight; that, bearing an especial good-will and favour toward them, he is disposed to exert his infinite wisdom and power in their behalf; is ready to impart all needful and convenient good unto them (help in their needs, supply in wants, protection in dangers; the direction, assistance, and comfort of his Holy Spirit; pardon of sins and peace of conscience; all the blessings of grace here, and all the felicities of glory hereafter;) such an interest, as it were, in God and a title unto him, such a possession and enjoyment of him we are capable of obtaining: and as that enjoyment is in

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XXV.1 Sam.  
xviii. 1.Heb. xi.  
16.1 John ii.  
23.  
Ps. cxix. 2.  
Isai. lxxv.  
1.Deut. xi.  
22.Josh. xxiii.  
8.1 Cor. vi.  
17.

Acts xi.

23.  
John xv.4;  
xvii. 21.1 John ii.  
24.

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Ps. lxxxiv.  
2;  
xlii. 1;  
lxiii. 1;  
cxliii. 6.

itself infinitely above all things desirable; so, if we love God, we cannot surely but be earnestly desirous thereof: a cold indifferency about it, a faint wishing for it, a slothful tendency after it, are much on this side love; it will inflame our heart, it will transport our mind, it will beget a vigorous and lively motion of soul toward it: for love, you know, is commonly resembled unto, yea even assumes the name of fire; for that it warms the breast, agitates the spirits, quickens all the powers of soul, and sets them on work in desire and pursuance of the beloved object: you may imagine as well fire without heat or activity, as love without some ardency of desire. *Longing and thirsting of soul; Fainting for, and panting after; Crying out, and stretching forth the hands toward God;* such are the expressions signifying the good Psalmist's love; by so apt and so pathetical resemblances doth he set out the vehemency of his desire to enjoy God. I need not add concerning endeavour; for that by plain consequence doth necessarily follow desire: the thirsty soul will never be at rest till it have found out its convenient refreshment: if we, as David did, do long after God, we shall also with him earnestly seek God; nor ever be at rest till we have found him. Coherent with this is a

3 Third property of this love, that is, a great complacence, satisfaction, and delight in the enjoyment of God: in the sense of having such a propriety in him; in the partaking those emanations of favour and beneficence from him; and consequently in the instruments conveying, in the means conducing to such enjoyment: for joy and content are the natural fruits of obtaining what we love,

what we much value, what we earnestly desire. SERM.  
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 Yea, what we chiefly love, if we become possessed thereof, we easily rest satisfied therewith, although all other comforts be wanting to us. The covetous person for instance, who dotes upon his wealth, let him be pinched with the want of conveniences; let his body be wearied with toil; let his mind be distracted with care; let him be surrounded with obloquy and disgrace—*At mihi plaudo ipse domi*<sup>a</sup>; he nevertheless enjoys himself in beholding his beloved pelf: the ambitious man likewise, although his state be full of trouble and disquiet; though he be the mark of common envy and hatred; though he be exposed to many crosses and dangers; yet while he stands in power and dignity, among all those thorns of care and fear, his heart enjoys much rest and pleasure. In like manner we may observe those pious men, whose hearts were endued with this love, by the present sense, or assured hope of enjoying God, supporting themselves under all wants and distresses; rejoicing, yea, boasting and exulting, in their afflictions; and no wonder, while they conceived themselves secure in the possession of their hearts' wish; of that which they incomparably valued and desired above all things; which by experience they have found so comfortable and delicious: *O taste and see*, exclaims the Psalmist, *inspired with this passion, O taste and see, that the Lord is good: How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O Lord! They (they who enjoy it) shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy*

Luke vi.

<sup>23.</sup> 1 Pet. iv.

<sup>13.</sup> Rom. v. 3.  
Col. i. 24.

Ps. xxxiv.  
8;

xxxvi. 7, 8.

<sup>a</sup> [Hor. Sat. 1. i. 66.]

**SERM. XXV.** pleasures: *A day in thy courts is better than a thousand: My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness:* so did those devout practisers of this duty express the satisfaction they felt in God, and in those things whereby he did impart the enjoyment of himself unto them. So did the light of God's countenance cheer their heart; so did his loving-kindness appear better than life itself unto them. Hence do they so frequently enjoin and exhort us to be glad; to delight ourselves; to glory; to rejoice continually in the Lord; in the sense of his goodness; in the hope of his favour; the doing so being an inseparable property of love; to which we adjoin another.

**Ps. lxxxiv. 10;**  
**lxiii. 5.**  
**Neh. ix. 25.**  
**Ps. iv. 6;**  
**lxiii. 3.**  
**Ps. xxxiii. 1;**  
**xxxii. 11;**  
**cv. 3;**  
**cvii. 8;**  
**xxxvii. 4.**

4 The feeling much displeasure and regret in being deprived of such enjoyment; in the absence or distance, as it were, of God from us; the loss or lessening of his favour; the subtraction of his gracious influences from us: for surely answerable to the love we bear unto any thing will be our grief for the want or loss thereof: it was a shrewd argument which the poet used to prove, that men loved their monies better than their friends, because—*Majore tumultu planguntur nummi, quam funera*<sup>b</sup>—they more lamented the loss of those than the death of these: indeed, that which a man principally affects, if he is bereaved thereof, be his condition otherwise how prosperous and comfortable soever, he cannot be contented; all other enjoyments become unsavoury and unsatisfactory to him. And so it is in our case, when God, although only for trial, according to his wisdom and good pleasure,

<sup>b</sup> [Juv. Sat. xiii. 130.]

hides his face, and withdraws his hand; leaving the soul in a kind of desolation and darkness; not finding that ready aid in distress, not feeling that cheerful vivacity in obedience, not tasting that sweet relish of devotion, which have been usually afforded thereto; if love reside in the heart, it will surely dispose it to a sensible grief; it will inspire such exclamations as those of the Psalmist:

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*How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thy face? Hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble: Turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies: Draw nigh unto my soul and redeem it.*

Ps. lxxxix.  
46;  
lxix. 17;  
xxx. 7;  
xlii. 3;  
lxix. 16,  
18.

Even our Saviour himself in such a case, when God seemed for a time to withdraw the light of his countenance, and the protection of his helpful hand from him, (or to frown and lay his heavy hand upon him,) had his soul, *Περὶλυπον ἕως θανάτου*, *Extremely grieved and full of deadly anguish*; neither surely was it any other cause than excess of love,

Matt.  
xxvi. 38;

which made that temporary desertion so grievous and bitter to him, extorting from his most meek and patient heart that woful complaint, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* But especially,

xxvii. 46.

when our iniquities have, as the Prophet expresseth it, separated between our God and us, and our sins have hid his face from us: when that thick cloud

Isai. lix. 2.  
Jer. v. 25.  
Isai. xlv.  
22.

hath eclipsed the light of his countenance, and intercepted his gracious influences; when, by wilfully offending, we have, as the Israelites are said to have done, rejected our God, cast him off, and driven him from us; so depriving ourselves of propriety in him, and the possession of his favour; then if any

1 Sam. viii.  
7;  
x. 19.

love be alive in us, it will prompt us, with those good men in their penitential agonies, to be griev-

Ps. vi;  
xxxv;  
xxxviii; li;



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Ps. cii ;  
cxxx ;  
cxliii ;  
xxxiii. 3 ;  
cxliii. 4 ;

cii. 4.

Ps. vi. 4 ;  
xxxviii.  
21 ;  
li. 11 ;  
cii. 2 ;  
cxliii. 7.

ously sensible of, and sorely to bewail that our wretched condition; *There will not*, if we so heartily love God, and value his favour as they did, be *any soundness in our flesh, or rest in our bones; Our spirit will be overwhelmed within us, and our heart within us desolate. Our heart will be smitten and withered like grass*, upon the consideration and sense of so inestimable a loss. Love will render such a condition very sad and uneasy to us; will make all other delights insipid and distasteful; all our life will become bitter and burdensome to us; neither, if it in any measure abides in us, shall we receive content, till, by humble deprecation, we have regained some glimpse of God's favour, some hope of being reinstated in our possession of him. Further yet,

5 Another property of this love is, to bear the highest good-will toward God; so as to wish heartily and effectually, according to our power, to procure all good to him, and to delight in it; so as to endeavour to prevent and to remove all evil, if I may so speak, that may befall him, and to be heartily displeased therewith. Although no such benefit or advantage can accrue to God which may increase his essential and indefectible happiness; no harm or damage can arrive that may impair it, (for he can be neither really more or less rich, or glorious, or joyful than he is; neither have our desire or our fear, our delight or our grief, our designs or our endeavours any object, any ground in those respects;) yet hath he declared, that there be certain interests and concernments, which, out of his abundant goodness and condescension, he doth tender and prosecute as his own: as if he did

Ps. xvi. 2.  
Job xxii. 3.

Jer. ix. 24.

really receive advantage by the good, and prejudice by the bad success, respectively belonging to them; that he earnestly desires, and is greatly delighted with some things, very much dislikes, and is grievously displeased with other things: for instance, that he bears a fatherly affection toward his creatures, and earnestly desires their welfare; and delights to see them enjoy the good he designed them; as also dislikes the contrary events; doth commiserate and condole their misery; that he is consequently well pleased, when piety and justice, peace and order (the chief means conducing to our welfare) do flourish; and displeased, when impiety and iniquity, dissension and disorder (those certain sources of mischief to us) do prevail; that he is well satisfied with our rendering to him that obedience, honour, and respect, which are due to him; and highly offended with our injurious and disrespectful behaviour toward him, in the commission of sin and violation of his most just and holy commandments: so that there wants not sufficient matter of our exercising good-will both in affection and action toward God; we are capable both of wishing, and (in a manner, as he will interpret and accept it) of doing good to him, by our concurrence with him, in promoting those things which he approves and delights in, and in removing the contrary. And so surely shall we do, if we truly love God: for love, as it would have the object to be its own, as it intends to enjoy it, so it would have it in its best state, and would put it thereinto, and would conserve it therein; and would thence contribute all it is able, to the welfare, to the ornament, to the pleasure

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and content thereof. *What is it, saith Cicero, to love, but to will or desire, that the person loved should receive the greatest good that can be? Love also doth reconcile, conform and unite the inclinations and affections of him who loves, to the inclinations and affections of him who is beloved; Eadem velle et eadem nolle, To consent in liking and disliking of things, if it be not the cause, if it be not the formal reason or essence, as some have made it, it is at least a certain effect of love. If then we truly love God, we shall desire, that all his designs prosper, that his pleasure be fulfilled, that all duty be performed, all glory rendered to him: we shall be grieved at the wrong, the dishonour, the disappointment he receives: especially we shall endeavour in our own practice, with holy*  
*David, To perform πάντα τὰ θελήματα αὐτοῦ, all that God wills, desires, or delights in; to eschew whatever offends him. Our desire, our delight, our endeavour will conspire with and be subordinate to his; for it would be a strange kind of love that were consistent with the voluntary doing of that which is hurtful, injurious, or offensive to that we love; such actions being the proper effects, the natural signs of hatred and enmity: If any*  
*man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar, saith St John; and, If any man seeth his brother need, and shutteth his bowels toward him, how doth the love of God abide in him? He that in his affections is so unlike, so contrary unto God; he that is unwilling to comply with God's will in so reasonable a performance; he that, in a matter wherein God hath declared himself so much con-*

Acts xiii.  
22.

1 John iv.  
20; iii. 17.

<sup>o</sup> Quid autem est amare—nisi velle bonis aliquem affici quam maximis?—Cic. de Fin. II. [24, 78.]

cerned, and so affected therewith, doth not care to cross him, to displease and disappoint him; how can he with any show of truth, or with any modesty pretend to love God? Hence it is, that keeping of God's commandments is commonly represented to us as the most proper expression, as the surest argument of our love to God: *Shewing mercy to thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments*; they are joined together as terms equivalent, or as inseparable companions in effect: *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: Ye are my friends, (that is, not only objects of my affection, but actively friends, bearing affection unto me,) if ye do whatsoever I command you, saith our Saviour: and, Whoso keepeth his word, in him is the love of God truly perfected.* (he hath the truth and sincerity; he hath the integrity and consummation of love: without it love is wholly false and counterfeit, or very lame and imperfect; so the loving and beloved disciple teaches us.) For by doing thus, as we signify our esteem of God's wisdom which directeth us, our dread of his power and justice that can punish us, our hope in his goodness and fidelity to reward us, our regard to his majesty and authority over us; so especially thereby, (if our obedience at least be free and cheerful,) we express our good-will toward him; shewing thereby, that we are disposed to do him all the good and gratify him all we can; that his interests, his honour, his content are dear and precious to us. And were indeed our hearts knit unto God, with this bond of perfection, we could not in our wills, and consequently in our practice, be so severed from him; we should also love heart-

SERM.  
XXV.Exod. xx.  
6.John xiv.  
21, 23;

xv. 14.

1 John ii.  
5.Ps. lxxxvi.  
11.  
Col. iii. 14.

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Ps. cxix.  
163, 165,  
113, 16,  
35, 70, 47,  
24, 77;  
i. 2;  
cxii. 1; xl.  
8.  
Heb. x. 7.  
John iv.  
34.  
Matt. xi.  
30.  
Prov. iii.  
12.

Ps. cxix.  
32.

ily all virtue and goodness, the nearest resemblances of him, and which he chiefly loves; we should do what David so oft professes himself to do, love his law, and greatly delight in his commandments. With our Saviour, we should delight to perform his will; it would (as it was to him) be our meat and our drink to do it; his yoke would be easy indeed, and his burden light unto us; his yoke so easy, that we should wear it rather as a jewel about our necks than as a yoke; his burden so light, that we should not feel it as a burden, but esteem it our privilege. We should not be so dull in apprehending, or so slack in performing duty; for this sharp-sighted affection would presently discern, would readily suggest it to us; by the least intimation it would perceive what pleaseth God, and would snatch opportunity of doing it: we should not need any arguments to persuade us, nor any force to compel us, love would inspire us with sufficient vigour and alacrity; it would urge and stimulate us forward not only to walk in, but even, as the Psalmist expresseth it, to run the ways of God's commandments.

But let thus much serve for explication of the nature of this duty; in order, as was before said, to the direction of our practice, and examination thereof: the particular duties mentioned, being comprehended in, or appertaining to the love of God, if we perceive that we practise them, we may, to our satisfaction and comfort, infer, that proportionably we are endued with this grace; if not, we have reason (such as should beget remorse and pious sorrow in us) to suspect we abide in a state of disaffection or of indifferency toward him. If

we find the former good disposition, we should strive to cherish and improve it; if the second bad one, we should (as we tender our own welfare and happiness, as we would avoid utter ruin and misery) endeavour to remove it. SERM.  
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II. To the effecting of which purposes I shall next propound some means conducive; some in way of removing obstacles, others by immediately promoting the duty.

Of the first kind are these ensuing:

I The destroying of all loves opposite to the love of God, extinguishing all affection to things odious and offensive to God: mortifying all corrupt and perverse, all unrighteous and unholy desires<sup>d</sup>. It agrees with souls no less than with bodies, that they cannot at once move or tend contrary ways; upward and downward, backward and forward at one time: it is not possible we should together truly esteem, earnestly desire, bear sincere goodwill to things in nature and inclination quite repugnant, each to other. No man ever took him for his real friend, who maintains correspondency, secret or open, who joins in acts of hostility with his professed enemies: at least we cannot, as we ought, love God with our whole heart, if, with any part thereof, we affect his enemies; those which are mortally and irreconcilably so; as are all iniquity and impurity, all inordinate lusts both of flesh and spirit: *The carnal mind*, Τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς (the minding or affecting of the flesh) is, <sup>7.</sup> St Paul tells us, *enmity toward God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor can be*; it is an enemy, even the worst of enemies, an incorrigibly

<sup>d</sup> *Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.*—Ps. xcvi. 10.

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James iv.  
4.

I John ii.  
15.

I John ii.  
16.

obstinate rebel against God; and can we then, retaining any love to God or peace with him, comply and conspire therewith? And, *The friendship of the world* (that is, I suppose, of those corrupt principles, and those vicious customs which usually prevail in the world) is also, St James tells us, *enmity with God*; so that he adds, *If any man be a friend to the world, he is thereby constituted, καθίσταται, (he immediately ipso facto becomes) an enemy to God.* St John affirms the same; *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*; explaining himself, that by the world he means those things, which are most generally embraced and practised therein: *The lust, or desire, of the flesh, (that is, sensuality and intemperance,) the lust of the eyes, (that is, envy, covetousness, vain curiosity, and the like,) the ostentation, or boasting, of life\*, (that is, pride, ambition, vain-glory, arrogance,) qualities, as irreconcilably opposite to the holy nature and will of God, so altogether inconsistent with the love of him; begetting in us an aversion and antipathy towards him; rendering his holiness distasteful to our affections, and his justice dreadful to our consciences; and himself consequently, his will, his law, his presence hateful to us: while we take him to be our enemy and to hate us, we shall certainly in like manner stand affected toward him: this indeed is the main obstacle, the removal of which will much facilitate the introduction of divine love; it being a great step to reconciliation and friendship, to be disengaged from the adverse party: we should then*

\* Ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς, καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου.—1 Joh. ii. 16.

easily discern the beauty of divine goodness and sanctity, when the mists of ignorance, of error, of corrupt prejudice, arising from those gross and carnal affections, were dissipated; we should better relish the sweet and savoury graces of God, when the palate of our mind were purged from vicious tinctures; we should be more ready to hope for peace and favour in his eyes, when our consciences were freed from the sense of such provocations and defilements. But,

2 If we would obtain this excellent grace, we must restrain our affections toward all other things, however in their nature innocent and indifferent. The young gentleman in the Gospel had, it seems, arrived to the former pitch; having through the course of his life abstained from grosser iniquities and impurities; so far, that our Saviour, in regard to that attainment of his, conceived an affection for him, (*He loved him, ἠγάπησεν αὐτόν* it is said,) yet was not he sufficiently disposed to love God; being in one thing deficient, that he retained an immoderate affection to his wealth and worldly conveniences; with which sort of affections the love of God cannot consist: for we much undervalue God, and cannot therefore duly love him, if we deem any thing comparable to him, or considerable in worth or usefulness when he comes in competition: if we deem, that the possession of any other thing beside him can confer to our happiness, or the want thereof can prejudice it, and make us miserable: no other love should bear any proportion to the love of him; no other object should appear (as indeed none really is) simply good, desirable, or amiable to us. What value St Paul had of his

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Matt. xix.

<sup>20.</sup>  
Luke xviii.  
<sup>18.</sup>

Mark x.

<sup>21.</sup>  
Luke xviii.  
<sup>22.</sup>

Phil. iii. 8.



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Luke xiv.  
26.

Matt. xxii.  
37.

Matt. vi.  
24.

Ps. lxxii. 10.  
1 Tim. vi.  
9.

legal qualifications and privileges, the same should we have concerning all other things in appearance pleasant or convenient to us; they ought, in regard to God, to seem damage and dung; not only mean and despicable, but even sordid and loathsome to us; not only unworthy of our regard and desire, but deserving our hatred and abhorrency; we should, I say, even hate the best of them; so our Saviour expresseth it: *If any man doth not hate his father and his mother, his wife and his children, his brothers and sisters, and even his own soul, (or his own life,) he cannot be my disciple;* that is, if any man retain in his heart any affection not infinitely, as it were, less than that which he bears to God; if any thing be in comparison dear and precious to him, he is not disposed to entertain the main point of Christ's discipline, the sincere and entire love of God.

To love him, as he requires, with all our heart, implies, that our heart be filled with his love, so that no room be left for any other passion to enter or dwell there. And indeed such, if we observe it, is the nature of our soul, we can hardly together harbour earnest or serious affections toward different objects; one of them will prevail and predominate; and so doing will not suffer the other to remain, but will extrude or extinguish it: no heart of man can correspond with two rivals, but, as our Saviour teacheth us, it will hate and despise one, will love and stick to the other; whence he infers, that, *We cannot serve* (that is, affectionately adhere to) *both God and mammon.* If we have, according to the Psalmist's phrase, set our hearts upon wealth, and will be rich, (are resolved to be, as St Paul expresseth it;) if we eagerly aspire to

power and honour with the Pharisees, preferring SERM. XXV. the applause of men before the favour of God; if John xii. 43. any worldly or bodily pleasure, or any curiosity how plausible soever, hath seized upon our spirits and captivated our affections; if any inferior object 2 Tim. iv. 10. whatever, with its apparent splendour, sweetness, goodliness, convenience, hath so inveigled our fancy, that we have an exceeding esteem thereof, and a greedy appetite thereto; that we enjoy it with huge content, and cannot part from it without much regret; that thing doth at present take up God's place within us; so that our heart is incapable, at least in due measure, of divine love: but if we be indifferently affected toward all such things, and are unconcerned in the presence or absence of them; esteeming them as they are, mean and vain; loving them as they deserve, as inferior and trivial; if, according to St Paul's direction, we used them 1 Cor. vii. 31. as if we used them not; it is another good step toward the love of God: the divine light will shine more brightly into so calm and serene a medium: a soul void of other affections will not be only more capable to receive, but apt to suck in that heavenly one; being insensible, in any considerable degree, of all other comforts and complacences, we shall be apt to search after, and reach out at that, which alone can satisfy our understanding and satiate our desires; especially if we add hereto,

3 The freeing of our hearts also from immoderate affection to ourselves; (I mean, not from a sober desire or an earnest regard to our own true good; for this, as nature enforces to, so all reason allows, and even God's command obligeth us to; nor can it be excessive; but a high conceit of our-

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selves as worthy or able, a high confidence in any thing we have within us or about us;) for this is a very strong bar against the entrance, as of all other charity, so especially of this; for as the love of an external object doth thrust, as it were, our soul outwards towards it; so the love of ourselves detains it within, or draws it inwards; and consequently these inclinations crossing each other cannot both have effect, but one will subdue and destroy the other. If our mind be—*Ipsa suis contenta bonis*—*satisfied with her own* (taking them for her own) endowments, abilities, or fancied perfections; if we imagine ourselves wise enough to perceive, good enough to choose, resolute enough to undertake, strong enough to achieve, constant enough to pursue whatever is conducive to our real happiness and best content; we shall not care to go further<sup>f</sup>; we will not be at the trouble to search abroad for that which, in our opinion, we can so readily find, so easily enjoy at home. If we so admire and doat upon ourselves, we thereby put ourselves into God's stead, and usurp the throne due to him in our hearts; comparing ourselves to God, and in effect preferring ourselves before him; thereby consequently shutting out that unparalleled esteem, that predominant affection we owe to him; while we are busy in dressing and decking, in courting and worshipping this idol of our fancy, we shall be estranged from the true object of our devotion; both we shall willingly neglect him, and he in just indignation will desert us. But if, as all other things, so even ourselves do appear exceedingly

<sup>f</sup> Τῷ γὰρ ὄντι, ὃ ἐξ αὐτοῦ τις ἔχει, περισσὸς καὶ μάταιος παρ' ἄλλου λαμβάνων.—Epict. Diss. i. 9. [31.]

vile and contemptible, foul and ugly in comparison to God; if we take ourselves to be (as truly we are) mere nothings, or somethings worse; not only destitute of all considerable perfections, but full of great defects; blind and fond in our conceits, crooked and perverse in our wills, infirm and unstable in all our powers, unable to discern, unwilling to embrace, backward to set upon, inconstant in prosecuting those things which are truly good and advantageous to us; if we have, I say, this right opinion and judgment of ourselves, seeing within us nothing lovely or desirable, no proper object there of our esteem or affection, no bottom to rest our mind upon, no ground of solid comfort at home, we shall then be apt to look abroad, to direct our eyes, and settle our affections upon somewhat more excellent in itself, or more beneficial to us, that seems better to deserve our regard, and more able to supply our defects. And if all other things about us appear alike deformed and deficient, unworthy our affection and unable to satisfy our desires; then may we be disposed to seek, to find, to fasten and repose our soul upon the only proper object of our love; in whom we shall obtain all that we need, infallible wisdom to guide us, omnipotent strength to help us, infinite goodness for us to admire and enjoy.

These are the chief obstacles, the removing of which conduces to the begetting and increasing the love of God in us. A soul so cleansed from love to bad and filthy things, so emptied of affection to vain and unprofitable things, so open and dilated by excluding all conceit of, all confidence in itself, is a vessel proper for the divine love to be infused into; into so large and pure a vacuity (as finer

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Gal. vi. 3.

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substances are apt to flow of themselves into spaces void of grosser matter) that free and moveable Spirit of divine grace will be ready to succeed, and therein to disperse itself. As all other things in nature, the clogs being removed which hinder them, do presently tend with all their force to the place of their rest and well being; so would, it seems, our souls, being loosed from baser affections obstructing them, willingly incline toward God, the natural centre, as it were, and bosom of their affection; would resume, as Origen speaks, *That natural philter* (that intrinsic spring, or incentive of love) *which all creatures have toward their Creator*<sup>s</sup>; especially, if to these we add those positive instruments, which are more immediately and directly subservient to the production of this love; they are these:

1 Attentive consideration of the divine perfections, with endeavour to obtain a right and clear apprehension of them.

2 The consideration of God's works and actions; his works and actions of nature, of providence, of grace.

3 Serious regard and reflection upon the peculiar benefits by the divine goodness vouchsafed to ourselves.

4 An earnest resolution and endeavour to perform God's commandments, although upon inferior considerations of reason; upon hope, fear, desire to attain the benefits of obedience, to shun the mischiefs from sin.

5 Assiduous prayer to Almighty God, that he

<sup>s</sup> 'Η λογική ψυχὴ—φίλτρον ἀναλαμβάνει φυσικὸν τὸ πρὸς τὸν κτίσαντα.—Orig. con. Celsum, iii. p. 135.

in mercy would be pleased to bestow his love upon us, and by his grace to work it in us. SERM.  
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But I must forbear the prosecution of these things, rather than further trespass upon your patience. Let us conclude all with a good Collect, sometimes used by our Church.

*O Lord, who hast taught us, that all our doings without charity are nothing worth, send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee; grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

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SERMON XXVI.  
OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

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MATT. XXII. 37.

*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God  
with all thy heart.*

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**WHICH** is the great commandment? was the question, in answer whereto our Saviour returns this text; and that with highest reason, (discernible by every man,) for that of necessity the love of God is the principal duty we owe unto him: the great duty indeed, as being largest in extent, and comprehending in a manner all other duties of piety; as that which exceeds in proper worth and dignity, (employing the noblest faculties of our souls in their best operations upon the most excellent object,) as that which communicates virtue unto, and hath a special influence upon all other duties; in fine, as that, which is the sum, the soul, the spring of all other duties: in discoursing whereupon, I did formerly (in this place) propound this method; first, to declare the nature thereof; then, to shew some means apt to beget and improve that excellent virtue in us; lastly, to propose some inducements to the practice thereof.

The first part I endeavoured to perform, by describing it according to its essential properties (common to love in general, and more particularly to this) of duly esteeming God, of desiring, according as we are capable, to possess and enjoy him, of

receiving delight and satisfaction in the enjoyment of him, of feeling displeasure in being deprived hereof, of bearing good-will unto him, expressed by endeavours to please him, by delighting in the advancement of his glory, by grieving when he is disserved or dishonoured.

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The next part I also entered upon, and offered to consideration those means, which serve chiefly to remove the impediments of our love to God; which were,

1 The suppressing all affections opposite to this; all perverse and corrupt, all unrighteous and unholy desires.

2 The restraining or keeping within bounds of moderation our affections toward other things, even in their nature innocent or indifferent.

3 The freeing of our hearts from immoderate affection toward ourselves; from all conceit of, and confidence in, any qualities or abilities of our own; the diligent use of which means I did suppose would conduce much to the production and increase of divine love within us.

To them I shall now proceed to subjoin other instruments more immediately and directly subservient to the same purpose: whereof the first is,

1 Attentive consideration upon the divine perfections, with endeavour to obtain a right and clear apprehension of them<sup>a</sup>: as counterfeit worth and beauty receive advantage by distance and darkness; so real excellency,—*Si propius stes, te capiet magis*<sup>b</sup>—the greater light you view it in, the

<sup>a</sup> Καθόλου μὲν ἡ τῶν παθῶν κακία διὰ τὴν περὶ Θεοῦ ἀγνωσίαν, ἡ ἀδόκιμον γνώσιν ἐγγίνεται.—Basil. de Jud. Dei, Opp. Tom. II. p. 260 c. [Ed. Paris. 1618.]

<sup>b</sup> [Hor. Ars Poet. 362.]



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nearer you approach it, the more strictly you examine it, the more you will approve and like it: so the more we think of God, the better we know him, the fuller and clearer conceptions we have of him, the more we shall be apt to esteem and desire him; the more excellent in himself, the more beneficial to us he will appear. Hence is the knowledge of God represented in holy writ, not only as a main instrument of religion, but as an essential character thereof: as equivalent to the being well affected toward God: *O continue*, saith the Psalmist, *thy loving-kindness unto them that know thee*; that is, to all religious people. And, *This*, saith our Saviour, *is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*; knowledge of them implying all good affections toward them: as on the other side, ignorance of God denotes disaffection or want of affection toward God: *Now the sons of Eli*, it is said, *were sons of Belial, they knew not the Lord*: and, *He that loveth not*, saith St John, *doth not know God*; the want of love to God is an evident sign, a natural effect of ignorance concerning him: indeed considering the nature of our mind, and its ordinary method of operation, it seems impossible, that such perfection discerned should not beget answerable reverence and affection thereto: if beautiful spectacles, harmonious sounds, fragrant odours, delicate savours do necessarily and certainly please the respective senses; why should not, with the like sure efficacy, the proper objects of our mind affect it, if duly represented and conveyed thereto? If the wit of the most ingenious artists, the cunning of the deepest politicians, the wisdom of the sagest philosophers are but mere blindness and stupidity in comparison to the wisdom of God;

Ps. xxxvi.  
10; ix. 10.  
Isai. v. 13;  
xi. 9.  
Hos. ii. 20.  
John xvii.  
3.  
Jer. xxii.  
16; xxiv. 7;  
xxxi. 34.  
2 Cor. x. 5.  
Isai. i. 3.  
Jer. xix. 3;  
x. 25.  
1 Thess. iv.  
5.  
1 Sam. ii.  
12.  
1 John iv.  
8.

the lowest instance or expression of whose wisdom  
*(His folly, as St Paul speaks, is wiser than men,)*  
doth excel the results of man's highest wisdom;  
yet them we admire and commend in men, why  
then do we not much more adore the divine wis-  
dom? If the abilities of them who dexterously  
manage great business, or achieve prosperously  
great exploits are indeed mere impotency in regard  
to God's power; *Whose weakness* (that is, the  
smallest effects of whose power) is, as St Paul again  
tells us, *stronger than men*, surpasses the utmost  
results of human endeavours: yet those things in  
men we extol and celebrate, how can we then  
forbear to reverence the divine power? If the  
dispensers of freest and largest bounty among men,  
the noblest patriots, the most munificent bene-  
factors, the most tenderly affectionate friends be, in  
respect of God, unworthy to be counted or called  
good, (as our Saviour tells us; *If ye being bad know*  
*to give good things;* and, *There is none good but*  
*God;*) yet such persons are much beloved and  
applauded: how then can we abstain from paying  
the like measure of affection and respect to the  
divine goodness? If good qualities, so inferior and  
defective, obtain so much from us, whence comes it,  
that the infinitely superior and most perfect excel-  
lencies of God do not beget, in their proportion, a  
suitable regard and veneration in us toward him?  
whence, if not either from our not firmly believing  
them, or not attentively considering them? Our  
belief of them in gross and at large we may suppose,  
as connected with the belief of God's existence, and  
included in the very notion of God; the defect  
therefore must proceed from the remaining causes,

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1 Cor. i. 25.

1 Cor. i. 25.

Matt. vii.

11.  
Luke xi.

13.  
Matt. xix.

17.

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want of a right apprehension, or neglect of attentive consideration about them: as to the first of these; it is common for men to have confused, imperfect, and wrong conceptions about the divine attributes, especially in the recesses of their mind; which, although they spare to utter with their mouths, yet they vent in their practice: if we, for instance, imagine, that we can comprehend the extent of God's designs, or fathom the depth of his counsels; if we measure and model his reasons of proceeding according to our fancy, (as if his thoughts were as our thoughts, and his ways as our ways; or, as if he did see as man sees;) if we can bless ourselves in following our own imaginations, counsels, and devices, although repugnant to the resolutions of divine wisdom; taking these not to befit, or not to concern us, as we find many in the scripture reproved for doing; we greatly mistake and undervalue that glorious attribute of God, his wisdom; and no wonder then, if we do not upon account thereof duly reverence and love God: likewise, if we concerning the divine power, conceit, that, notwithstanding it, we shall be able to accomplish our unlawful designs; that we may, as it is in Job, harden our hearts against him and prosper; that we can anywise either withstand or evade his power, (as also many are intimated to do, in scripture; even generally all those who dare presumptuously to offend God,) we also misconceive of that excellent attribute; and the contempt of God, rather than love of him, will thence arise. If, concerning the divine goodness and holiness, we imagine that God is disaffected toward his creatures, (antecedently to all demerits, or bad qualifications in them,) yea

Isai. lv. 8.

1 Sam. xvi.

Deut.

xxix. 19.

Ps. lxxxii.

12; cvii. 11.

Isai. lxxv.

2; liii. 6.

Jer. xviii.

12.

Hos. x. 12;

viii. 12.

Ps. lxxiii.

11; x. 11;

xciv. 7.

Job ix. 4.

Isai. xlv.

9; x. 15;

liv. 17.

1 Cor. x.

22.

Dan. v. 23.

Amos ix. 2.

Isai. ii. 19.

Deut.

xxviii. 29.

Num.

xiv. 41.

2 Chron.

xiii. 12.

indifferent in affection toward them; inclinable to do them harm, or not propense to do them good; if we deem him apt to be harsh and rigorous in his proceedings, to exact performances unsuitable to the strength he hath given us, to impose burdens intolerable upon us<sup>c</sup>; will not such thoughts be apt to breed in us toward God, (as they would toward any other person so disposed,) rather a servile dread, (little different from downright hatred,) or an hostile aversation, than a genuine reverence, or a kindly affection toward him? If we fancy him, like to pettish man, apt to be displeased without cause, or beyond measure, for our doing somewhat innocent, (neither bad in itself, nor prejudicial to public or private good,) or for our omitting that, which no law, no good reason plainly requires of us; what will such thoughts but sour our spirits toward him, make us fearful and suspicious of him; which sort of dispositions are inconsistent with true love? If, on the other side, we judge him fond and partial in his affections; or slack and easy, as it were, in his proceedings; apt to favour us although we neglect him; to indulge us in our sins, or connive at our miscarriages; will not such thoughts rather incline us in our hearts to slight him, and in our actions insolently to dally with him, than heartily and humbly to love him? If we conceit his favour procured, or his anger appeased by petty observances, perhaps without any good rule or reason affected by ourselves; when we neglect duties of greater worth and consequence, *The more weighty matters of the Law*; what is this but, instead of God, to reverence

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Matt.  
xxiii. 23.

<sup>c</sup> Τόν γε Θεόν οὐ ῥητέον ἔχειν ἦθος τοιοῦτον, ὃ γέ τοι αὐτὸς μισεῖ.—  
Plat. de Leg. x. [901 A.]

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an idol of our own fancy; to yield unto him, (who is only pleased with holy dispositions of mind, with real effects of goodness,) not duties of humble love, but acts of presumption and flattery? But if, contrariwise, we truly conceive of God's wisdom, that his counsels are always thoroughly good, and that we are concerned both in duty and interest to follow them, although exceeding the reach of our understanding, or contrary to the suggestions of our fancy; concerning his power, that it will certainly interpose itself to the hinderance of our bad projects, that it will be in vain to contest therewith, that we must submit unto, or shall be crushed by his hand; concerning his goodness, that as he is infinitely good and benign, so he is also perfectly holy and pure; as he wisheth us all good, and is ready to promote it, so he detesteth our sins, nor will suffer us to do himself, ourselves, and our neighbour any wrong; as most bountiful in dispensing his favours, so not prodigal of them, or apt to cast them away on such as little value them, and do not endeavour to answer them; as a faithful rewarder of all true virtue and piety, so a severe chastiser of all iniquity and profaneness; as full of mercy and pity toward them, who are sensible of their unworthiness, and penitent for their faults, so an implacable avenger of obstinate and incorrigible wickedness: in fine, as a true friend to us, if we be not wilful enemies to him, and desirous of our welfare, if we do not perversely render ourselves incapable thereof; so withal jealous of his own honour, resolute to maintain and vindicate his just authority, careful to uphold the interests of right and truth, and to shew the distinction he makes between good and evil; if

Isai. v. 4.  
Hab. i. 13.  
Ps. v. 4;  
xi. 5, &c.

we have, I say, such conceptions of God, (agreeable to what his word and his doings represent him to us,) how can we otherwise than bear a most high respect, a most great affection unto him? A prince surely endued with such qualities; wise and powerful, good and just together; tendering the good of his people, yet preserving the force of his laws; designing always what is best, and constantly pursuing his good intentions; tempering bounty and clemency with needful justice and severity; we should all commend and extol as worthy of most affectionate veneration; how much more then shall we be so affected toward him, in whom we apprehend all those excellencies to concur without any imperfection or allay? especially if, by attention, we impress those conceptions upon our hearts; for how true and proper soever, if they be only slight and transient, they may not suffice to this intent; if they pass away as a flash, they will not be able to kindle in us any strong affection. But if such abstracted consideration of the divine perfections will not alone wholly avail, let us add hereto, as a further help toward the production and increase of this divine grace in us,

2 The consideration of God's works and actions; his works of nature, his acts of providence, his works and acts of grace; the careful meditating upon these will be apt to breed, to nourish, to improve, and augment this affection. Even the contemplation of the lower works of nature, of this visible frame of things, (upon which indeed many perspicuous characters of divine perfection, of immense power, of admirable wisdom, of abundant goodness are engraven,) hath in many minds excited a very high degree of reverence and good

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Ps. viii;  
xix; cxlv;  
civ; cxlvii.

affection toward God: the devoutest persons (the holy Psalmist particularly) we may observe frequent in this practice, inflaming their hearts with love, and elevating them in reverence toward God, by surveying the common works of God, by viewing and considering the magnificent vastness and variety, the goodly order and beauty, the constant duration and stability of those things we see; in remarking the general bounty and munificence with which this great *Paterfamilias* hath provided for the necessary sustenance, for the convenience, for the defence, for the relief, for the delight and satisfaction of his creatures: even in the contemplation of these things being ravished with admiration and affection, how often do they thus exclaim: *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord: the earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy! Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite: All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord:* with such reflections, I say, upon those common, yet admirable and excellent works of God, (which we perhaps with a regardless eye unprofitably pass over,) did those good men kindle and foment pious affections toward God. The same effect may also the considering the very common proceedings of divine providence beget in us; such as are discernible to every attentive mind, both from history and daily experience; considering God's admirable condescension in regarding and ordering human affairs both for common benefit, and for relief of particular necessities, his supplying the general needs of men, relieving the poor, succouring the weak and helpless, protecting and vindicating the oppressed, his seasonable encou-



raging and rewarding the good, restraining and chastising the bad: even such observations are productive of love to God in those, who, according to that duty intimated by the prophet, *Do regard the works of the Lord, and consider the operations of his hands; They who are wise, and will observe these things, they, as the Psalmist tells, shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord*; understand it practically, so as to be duly affected thereby; and so, accordingly, we find the consideration of these things applied by the great guides and patterns of our devotion. But, especially, the study and contemplation of those more high and rare proceedings of God, in managing his gracious design of our Redemption from sin and misery, wherein a wisdom so unsearchable and a goodness so astonishing declare themselves, are most proper and effectual means of begetting divine love: if the consideration of God's eternal care for our welfare, of his descending to the lowest condition for our sake, of his willingly undertaking and patiently undergoing all kinds of inconvenience, of disgrace, of bitter pain and sorrow for us; of his freely offering us mercy, and earnestly wooing us to receive it, even when offenders, when enemies, when rebels against him; of his bearing with exceeding patience all our neglects of him, all our injuries towards him; of his preparing a treasure of perfect and endless bliss, and using all means possible to bring us unto the possession thereof; if, I say, considering those wonderful strains of goodness will not affect us, what can do it? How miserably cold and damp must our affections be, if all those powerful rays (so full of heavenly light and heat) shining through our

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Isai. v. 12.  
Ps. xxviii.  
5; cvii. 43;  
lxiv. 9; cxi.  
2; lxxvii.  
11; cxliii.  
5.



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minds cannot inflame them? how desperately hard and tough must our hearts be, if such incentives cannot soften and melt them? Is it not an apathy more than stoical, more than stony, which can stand immoveable before so mighty inducements to passion? Is it not a horridly prodigious insensibility to think upon such expressions of kindness, without feeling affection reciprocal? But if the consideration of God's general and public beneficence will not touch us sufficiently, let us further hereto adjoin,

3 Serious reflections upon the peculiar (personal or private) benefits by the divine goodness vouchsafed unto ourselves. There is, I suppose, scarce any man, who may not, if he be not very stupid and regardless, have observed, beside the common effects of God's universal care and bounty wherein he partakes, even some particular expressions and testimonies of divine favour dispensed unto him by God's hand, (apt to convince him of God's especial providence, care, and good-will to him particularly, and thereby to draw him unto God,) both in relation to his temporal and to his spiritual state; in preventing and preserving him from mischiefs imminent, in opportune relief, when he was pressed with want, or surprised by danger; in directing him to good, and diverting him from evil. Every man's experience, I say and suppose, will inform him, that he hath received many such benefits from a hand, invisible indeed to sense, yet easily discernible, if he do attend to the circumstances wherein, to the seasons when they come; it is natural to every man being in distress, from which he cannot, by any present or visible means, extricate himself, to stretch forth his hand and lift

up his voice toward heaven, making his recourse to divine help; and it is as natural for God to regard the needs, to hearken to the cries, to satisfy the desires of such persons; for, *The Lord is nigh to all that call upon him: he openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing: He will be a refuge to the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble: He satisfieth the longing soul and filleth the hungry soul with goodness: They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing: Look at the generations of old, and see; did ever any trust in the Lord, and was forsaken? or whom did he ever despise that called upon him? This poor man (this, and that, any poor man,) cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles:* since then no man, in all likelihood, hath not some occasion of God's especial favour and assistance, and God is always so ready to afford them, we may reasonably presume that every man doth sometime receive them, and is thereby obliged to return a grateful affection to him, not only as to a common benefactor, but as to his particular friend and patron. However, there is none of us, who may not perceive himself singularly indebted to God's patience in forbearing to punish him, to his mercy in pardoning and passing over innumerable offences committed against him: the renowned penitent in the Gospel did love much, because much was forgiven her: and who is there of us, that hath not the same reason to love much? Who is there that, at least according to God's inclination and intention, hath not had much forgiven him? Whom have not the riches of divine goodness and long-suffering attended upon in order to his repentance? Who hath not been in so great

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Ps. cxlv.  
16, 18;

ix. 9;

cvii. 9;

xxxiv. 10.

Ecclus. ii.  
10.

Ps. xxxiv.  
6.

Luke vii.  
47.

Rom. ii. 4.

SERM. XXVI. degree ungrateful, unfruitful, and unprofitable, that he hath not abundant reason to acknowledge God's especial grace in bearing with him, and to confess with Jacob, that he is less than the least of all God's mercies? If any such there were, he should have no less cause to be affected with the abundance of that grace, which so preserved him from sins and provocations. For if we stand, it is he that upholdeth us; if we fall, it is he that raiseth us; it is his especial favour, that either we avoid sin, or sinning escape punishment. Now then God having, by many real evidences, declared such particular affection toward us, can we, considering thereon, do otherwise than say to ourselves, after St John, *Nos ergo diligamus Deum, quoniam prior dilexit nos; Let us therefore love God, because God first loved us:* surely in all ingenuity, according to all equity, we are bound to do so; the reason and nature of things doth require it of us: all other loves, even those of the baser sort, are able to propagate themselves; (to continue and enlarge their kind;) are commonly fruitful and effectual in producing their like<sup>d</sup>: how strangely then unnatural and monstrous is it, that this love only, this so vigorous and perfect love, should be barren and impotent as it were! *If you love those that love you,* saith our Saviour, *what reward have you?* (what reward can you pretend to for so common, so necessary a performance?) *do not even the publicans the same?* (the publicans, men not usually of the best natures, or tenderest hearts, yet they do thus.) And again, saith he, *If you love those who*

Luke xvii. 10.  
Ps. cxxx. 3.  
Gen. xxxii. 10.  
Ps. xxxvii. 23; cxlvi. 8.  
1 John iv. 19.  
Matt. v. 46.  
Luke vi. 32.

<sup>d</sup> Χάρις χάριν γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ τίκτουσ' αἰεί.

Soph. [Ajax, 522.]

love you, what thank is it? for even sinners love those that love them; (sinners, men not led by conscience of duty, or regard to reason, but hurried with a kind of blind and violent force, by instinct of nature, do so much, go so far.) If thus men, both by nature and custom most untractable, the least guided by rules of right, of reason, of ingenuity; yea, not only the most barbarous men, but even the most savage beasts are sensible of courtesies, return a kind of affection unto them who make much of them, and do them good; what temper are we of, if all that bounty we experience cannot move us; if God's daily loading us with his benefits, if his crowning us with loving-kindness and tender mercies, if all those showers of blessings, which he continually poureth down upon our heads, do not produce some good degree of correspondent affection in us? It cannot surely proceed altogether from a wretched baseness of disposition, that we are so cold and indifferent in our affection toward God, or are sometimes so averse from loving him; it must rather, in great part, come from our not observing carefully, not frequently calling to mind, not earnestly considering what God hath done for us, how exceedingly we stand obliged to his goodness, from our following that untoward generation of men, *Who were not, it is said, mindful of the wonders which God did among them; Who remembered not his hand, nor the day that he delivered them;* rather following, I say, such careless and heartless people, (so they are termed,) than imitating that excellent person's discretion, who constantly did set God's loving-kindness before his eyes, who frequently did thus raise his mind, and rouse up

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Ps. lxxviii.  
19; ciii. 4.  
Ezek.  
xxxiv. 26.

Neh. ix.  
17.  
Ps. lxxviii.  
42.

Deut. v.  
29; xxix.  
4.  
Ps. xxvi.  
3.

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Ps. ciii.

his affections; *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases, &c.* It is not for want of the like experience, or the like obligation, but for want of the same wisdom, of the same care, of the same honest consideration and diligence, that we do not the like.

To these means I add that,

4 A special help to breed in us this holy disposition of soul will be the setting ourselves in good earnest, with a strong and constant resolution, to endeavour the performance of all our duty toward God, and keeping his commandments, although upon inferior considerations of reason, such as we are capable of applying to this purpose; regards of fear, of hope, of desire to avoid the mischiefs arising from sin, or attaining the benefits ensuing upon virtue. If we cannot immediately raise our hearts to that higher pitch of acting from that nobler principle of love, let us however apply that we can reach unto practice, striving as we are able to perform what God requires of us; exercising ourselves, as to material acts, in keeping a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man; the doing which, as it may in time discover the excellency of goodness to our mind, so it will by degrees reconcile our affections thereto; then, by God's blessing, (who graciously regards the meanest endeavours toward good; *Who despiseth not the day of small things; Who will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed,*) from doing good out of a sober regard to our own welfare, we shall come to like it in itself, and consequently to love

Zech. iv.

10.

Isai. xlii.

3.

him, unto whose nature, and to whose will, it renders us conformable: for as doing ill breeds a dislike to goodness, and an aversion from him who himself is full thereof, and who rigorously exacts it of us; as a bad conscience removes expectation of good from God, and begets a suspicion of evil from him, consequently stifling all kindness toward him; so, doing well, we shall become acquainted with it, and friends thereto; a hearty approbation, esteem, and good-liking thereof will ensue; finding by experience, that indeed the ways of wisdom, virtue, and piety are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; that the fruits of conscientious practice are health to our body and to our soul, security to our estate and to our reputation, rest in our mind, and comfort in our conscience: goodness will become precious in our eyes, and he who commends it to us, being himself essential goodness, will appear most venerable and most amiable, we shall then become disposed to render him, what we perceive he best deserves, entire reverence and affection.

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Prov. iii.  
17.

5 But I commend further, as a most necessary mean of attaining this disposition, assiduous earnest prayer unto God, that he would in mercy bestow it on us, and by his grace work it in us: which practice is indeed doubly conducive to this purpose; both in way of impetration, and by real efficacy: it will not fail to obtain it as a gift from God; it will help to produce it as an instrument of God's grace.

Upon the first account it is absolutely necessary; for it is from God's free representation of himself as lovely to our minds, and drawing our hearts unto him, (although ordinarily in the use of

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the means already mentioned, or some like to them,) that this affection is kindled; our bare consideration is too cold, our rational discourse too faint: we cannot sufficiently recollect our wandering thoughts, we cannot strongly enough impress those proper incentives of love upon our hearts, (our hearts so damped with sensual desires, so clogged and pestered with earthly inclinations,) so as to kindle in our souls this holy flame; it can only be effected by a light shining from God, by a fire coming from heaven: as all others, so more especially this queen of graces must proceed from the Father of lights, and Giver of all good gifts: he alone, who is love, can be the parent of so goodly an offspring, can beget this lively image of himself within us: it is the principal fruit of God's holy Spirit, nor can it grow from any other root than from it: it is called, *The love of the Spirit*, as its most signal and peculiar effect: in fine, *The love of God*, as St Paul expressly teaches us, *is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us*; given, but that not without asking, without seeking; a grace so excellent, God, we may be assured, will not dispense, a gift so precious he will not bestow on them, who do not care to look after it, who will not vouchsafe to beg it: if we are not willing to acknowledge our want thereof; if we refuse to express our desire of it; if we will not shew that we regard and value it; if, when God freely offers it, and invites us to receive it, (he doth so by offering his holy Spirit, the fountain thereof, unto us,) we will not decently apply ourselves to him for it, how can we expect to obtain it? God hath propounded this condition, (and it is surely no hard, no grievous condition,)

James i.  
17.

Gal. v. 22.

Rom. xv.  
30.

Rom. v. 5.

*If we ask we shall receive*; he hath expressly promised that, *He will give his Spirit* (his Spirit of love) *to them who ask it*: we may be therefore sure, performing the condition duly, to obtain it; and as sure, neglecting that, we deserve to go without.

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Luke xi. 9,  
13.  
Matt. xxi.  
22; vii. 7.  
1 Chron.  
xxviii. 9.  
2 Chron.  
xv. 2.

Prayer then is upon this account a needful means; and it is a very profitable one upon the score of its own immediate energy or virtue: for as by familiar converse, (together with the delights and advantages attending thereon,) other friendships are begot and nourished, so even by that acquaintance, as it were, with God, which devotion begets, by experience therein how sweet and good he is, this affection is produced and strengthened. As want of intercourse weakens and dissolves friendship<sup>o</sup>; so if we seldom come at God, or little converse with him, it is not only a sign, but will be a cause of estrangement and disaffection toward him: according to the nature of the thing, prayer hath peculiar advantages above other acts of piety to this effect: therein, not only as in contemplation, the eye of our mind (our intellectual part) is directed toward God; but our affections also (the hand of our soul by which we embrace good, the feet thereof by which we pursue it) are drawn out and fixed upon him; we not only therein behold his excellencies, but in a manner feel them and enjoy them; our hearts also, being thereby softened and warmed by desire, become more susceptible of love. We do, in the performance of this duty, approach nearer to God, and consequently God draws nearer to us, (as St James

<sup>o</sup> Πολλὰς δὲ φιλίας ἀπροσηγορία διέλυσεν.—[Arist. Eth. viii. 5, 1.]



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James iv. 8. assures; *Draw near*, saith he, *unto God, and he will draw near to you,*) and thereby we partake more fully and strongly of his gracious influences; therein indeed he most freely communicates his grace, therein he makes us most sensible of his love to us, and thereby disposeth us to love him again. I add, that true (fervent and hearty) prayer doth include and suppose some acts of love, or some near tendencies thereto; whence, as every habit is corroborated by acts of its kind, so by this practice divine love will be confirmed and increased. These are the means, which my meditation did suggest as conducing to the production and growth of this most excellent grace in our souls.

III. I should, lastly, propound some inducements apt to stir us up to the endeavour of procuring it, and to the exercise thereof, by representing to your consideration the blessed fruits and benefits (both by way of natural causality and of reward) accruing from it; as also the woful consequences and mischiefs springing from the want thereof. How being endued with it perfects and advances our nature, rendering it, in a manner and degree, divine, by resemblance to God, (who is full thereof, so full that he is called love,) by approximation, adherence, and union, in a sort, unto him: how it ennobles us with the most glorious alliance possible, rendering us the friends and favourites of the sovereign King and Lord of all, brethren of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; enriches us with a right and title to the most inestimable treasures, (those which, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man to conceive, which God hath prepared for*

Heb. xii. 23.  
1 Cor. ii. 9.

*them that love him,*) a sure possession of the supreme good, of all that God is able to bestow, all whose wisdom and power, whose counsel and care it eternally engageth for our benefit; how all security and welfare, all rest and peace, all joy and happiness attend upon it; for that, *The Lord preserveth all them that love him,* (preserveth them in the enjoyment of all good, in safety from all danger and mischief,) and that, *To those who love God all things co-operate for their good:* how incomparable a sweetness and delight accompany the practice thereof, far surpassing all other pleasures; perfectly able to content our minds, to sustain and comfort us even in the want of all other satisfactions, yea under the pressure of whatever most grievous afflictions can befall us. How contrariwise the want thereof will depress us into a state of greatest imperfection and baseness, setting us at the greatest distance from God in all respects, both in similitude of nature, and as to all favourable regard, or beneficial communication from him; casting us into a wretched and disgraceful consortship with the most degenerate creatures, the accursed fiends, who, for disaffection and enmity toward God, are banished from all happiness; how it extremely impoverisheth and beggareth us, divesting us of all right to any good thing, rendering us incapable of any portion, but that of utter darkness; how it excludeth us from any safety, any rest, any true comfort or joy, and exposeth us to all mischief and misery imaginable; all that being deprived of the divine protection, presence, and favour, being made objects of the divine anger, hatred, and severe justice, being abandoned to the malice of hell, being driven into

SERM.  
XXVI.

Ps. cxlv.  
20.

Rom. viii.  
28.

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utter darkness and eternal fire doth import or can produce. I should also have commended this love to you by comparing it with other loves, and shewing how far in its nature, in its causes, in its properties, in its effects, it excelleth them : even so far as the object thereof in excellency doth transcend all other objects of our affection ; how this is grounded upon the highest and surest reason ; others upon accounts very low and mean, commonly upon fond humour and mistake ; this produceth real, certain, immutable goods ; others at best terminate only in goods apparent, unstable, and transitory ; this is most worthy of us, employing all our faculties in their noblest manner of operation upon the best object ; others misbeseem us, so that in pursuing them we disgrace our understanding, misapply our desires, distemper our affections, misspend our endeavours. I should have enlarged upon these considerations ; and should have adjoined some particular advantages of this grace ; as, for instance, that the procuring thereof is the most sure, the most easy, the most compendious way of attaining all others ; of sweetening and ingratiating all obedience to us ; of making the hardest yoke easy, and the heaviest burden light unto us. In fine, I should have wished you to consider, that its practice is not only a mean and way to happiness, but our very formal happiness itself ; the real enjoyment of the best good we are capable of ; that in which alone heaven itself (the felicity of Saints and Angels) doth consist ; which more than comprehends in itself all the benefits of highest dignity, richest plenty, and sweetest pleasure. But I shall forbear entering upon so ample and fruitful subjects of

meditation, and conclude with that good Collect SERM.  
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of our church:

*O Lord, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass man's understanding; pour into our hearts such love toward thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

SERMON XXVII.  
OF THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

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MATT. XXII. 39.

*And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

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Ps. xxxiii.  
5; cxix. 64.

THE essential goodness of God, and his special benignity toward mankind, are to a considering mind divers ways very apparent; the frame of the world, and the natural course of things, do with a thousand voices loudly and clearly proclaim them to us; every sense doth yield us affidavit to that speech of the holy Psalmist, *The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord*: we see it in the glorious brightness of the skies, and in the pleasant verdure of the fields; we taste it in the various delicacies of food, supplied by land and sea; we smell it in the fragrances of herbs and flowers; we hear it in the natural music of the woods; we feel it in the comfortable warmth of heaven, and in the cheering freshness of the air; we continually do possess and enjoy it in the numberless accommodations of life, presented to us by the bountiful hand of nature.

\* [This is most probably the sermon, of which the following mention is found in Evelyn's Diary. "1675, April 25. Dr Barrow, that excellent, pious, and most learned man, divine, mathematician, poet, traveller, and most humble person preached at Whitehall to the Household on Luke x. 27, 'Of love and charity to our neighbour.'" In the MS. of the sermon there are two texts prefixed: Matt. xxii. 39, Luke x. 27.]

Of the same goodness we may be well assured by that common providence, which continually doth uphold us in our being, doth opportunely relieve our needs, doth protect us in dangers, and rescue us from imminent mischiefs, doth comport with our infirmities and misdemeanours; the which, in the divine Psalmist's style, *Doth hold our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved; Doth redeem our life from destruction; doth crown us with lovingkindness, and tender mercies.*

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XXVII.

Ps. lvi. 9;  
lvi. 13; ciii.  
4; cxlv. 16.

The dispensations of grace, in the revelation of heavenly truth, in the overtures of mercy, in the succours of our weakness, in the proposal of glorious rewards, in all the methods and means conducing to our salvation, do afford most admirable proofs and pledges of the same immense benignity.

But in nothing is the divine goodness toward us more illustriously conspicuous, than in the nature and tendency of those laws, which God hath been pleased, for the regulation of our lives, to prescribe unto us, all which do palpably evidence his serious desire and provident care of our welfare; so that, in imposing them, he plainly doth not so much exercise his sovereignty over us, as express his kindness toward us; neither do they more clearly declare his will, than demonstrate his good-will to us.

And among all divine precepts this, especially, contained in my text, doth argue the wonderful goodness of our heavenly Lawgiver, appearing both in the manner of the proposal, and in the substance of it.

*The second*, saith our Lord, *is like to it*; that is, to the precept of loving the Lord our God with all

Matt. xxii.  
39.  
Luke x. 27

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our heart: and is not this a mighty argument of immense goodness in God, that he doth, in such a manner, commend this duty to us, coupling it with our main duty toward him, and requiring us with like earnestness to love our neighbour as to love himself?

He is transcendently amiable for the excellency of his nature; he, by innumerable and inestimable benefits graciously conferred on us, hath deserved our utmost affection; so that naturally there can be no obligation bearing any proportion or considerable semblance to that of loving him: yet hath he in goodness been pleased to create one, and to endue it with that privilege; making the love of a man (whom we cannot value but for his gifts, to whom we can owe nothing but what properly we owe to him) no less obligatory, to declare it, near as acceptable as the love of himself, to whom we owe all. To him, as the sole author and free donor of all our good, by just correspondence, all our mind and heart, all our strength and endeavour, are due: and reasonably might he engross them to himself, excluding all other beings from any share in them; so that we might be obliged only to fix our thoughts and set our affections on him, only to act directly for his honour and interest; saying with the holy

Ps. lxxiii.  
25.

Psalmist, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee:* yet doth he freely please to impart a share of these performances on mankind; yet doth he charge us to place our affection on one another; to place it there, indeed, in a measure so large, that we can hardly imagine a greater; according to a rule, than which none can be devised more complete or certain.

O marvellous condescension, O goodness truly divine, which surpasseth the nature of things, which dispenseth with the highest right, and foregoeth the greatest interest that can be! Doth not God in a sort debase himself, that he might advance us? Doth he not appear to wave his own due, and neglect his own honour for our advantage? How otherwise could the love of man be capable of any resemblance to the love of God, and not stand in an infinite distance, or in an extreme disparity from it? How otherwise could we be obliged to affect or regard any thing beside the sovereign, the only goodness? How otherwise could there be any second or like to that first, that great, that peerless command, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart?*

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Matt. xix.  
17.

Matt. xxii.  
38.

This indeed is the highest commendation whereof any law is capable: for, as to be like God is the highest praise that can be given to a person; so to resemble the divinest law of love to God is the fairest character that can be assigned of a law: the which indeed representeth it to be, *Nóμος βασιλικός*, as St James calleth it; that is, a *Royal and sovereign law*; exalted above all others, and bearing a sway on them. St Paul telleth us, that, *The end of the commandment* (or, the main scope of the evangelical doctrine) is *charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned*; that charity is the sum and substance of all other duties, and that, *He that loveth another hath fulfilled the whole law*; that charity is the chief of the theological virtues, and the prime fruit of the divine Spirit; and, *The bond of perfection*, which combineth and consummateth all other graces, and the

James ii. 8.

1 Tim. i. 5.

Rom. xiii.  
8, 9.

Gal. v. 14.

1 Cor. xiii.

13.

Gal. v. 22.

Col. iii. 14.

1 Cor. xvi.  
14.



**SERM. XXVII.** general principle of all our doings. St Peter enjoineth us, that to all other virtues we add charity, as the top and crown of them; and, *Above all things*, saith he, *have fervent charity among yourselves*. St John calleth this law, in way of excellence, *The commandment of God*: and our Lord himself claimeth it as his peculiar precept, *This*, saith he, *is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you: A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another: and maketh the observance of it the special cognizance of his followers, By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.*

2 Pet. i. 7.  
1 Pet. iv. 8.  
1 John iii. 23; iv. 21.  
John xv. 12;  
xiii. 34.  
John xiii. 35.

These indeed are lofty commendations thereof, yet all of them may worthily veil to this; all of them seem verified in virtue of this, because God hath vouchsafed to place this command in so near adjacency to the first great law, conjoining the two tables: making charity contiguous, and, as it were, commensurate to piety.

It is true, that in many respects charity doth resemble piety; for it is the most genuine daughter of piety, thence in complexion, in features, in humour, much favouring its sweet mother: it doth consist in like dispositions and motions of soul: it doth grow from the same roots and principles of benignity, ingenuity, equity, gratitude, planted in our original constitution by the breath of God, and improved in our hearts by the divine Spirit of love; it produceth the like fruits of beneficence toward others, and of comfort in ourselves; it, in like manner, doth assimilate us to God, rendering us conformable to his nature, followers of his practice, and partakers of his felicity: it is of like use and

1 John iv. 7, 11.  
Matt. v. 45.  
Eph. v. 1, 2.

consequence toward the regulation of our practice, and due management of our whole life: in such respects, I say, this law is like to the other; but it is however chiefly so, for that God hath pleased to lay so great stress thereon, as to make it the other half of our religion and duty; or because, as St John saith, *This commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also*; which is, to his praise, a most pregnant demonstration of his immense goodness toward us.

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Matt. xxii.

40.

1 John iv.

21.

But no less, in the very substance of this duty, will the benignity of him that prescribeth it shine forth, displaying itself in the rare beauty and sweetness of it; together with the vast benefit and utility, which it, being observed, will yield to mankind; which will appear by what we may discourse for pressing its observance. But, first, let us explain it, as it lieth before us expressed in the words of the text, wherein we shall consider two particulars observable: first, the object of the duty; secondly, the qualification annexed to it: the object of it, *Our neighbour*; the qualification, *As ourselves*.

I. The object of charity is *Our neighbour*; that is, (it being understood, as the precept now concerneth us, according to our Lord's exposition, or according to his intent and the tenor of his doctrine,) every man, with whom we have to do, or who is capable of our love, especially every Christian.

Luke x.  
30—37.

The Law, as it was given to God's ancient people, did openly regard only those among them, who were linked together in a holy neighbourhood or society, from which all other men being excluded were deemed strangers and foreigners; (*Aliens*, as Eph. ii. 12.

SERM.  
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Lev. xix.  
18.

Lev. xx.  
24, 26.  
Exod.  
xxxiii. 16.  
Deut. vii.  
6; xiv. 2.

Lev. xix.  
34.

Eph. ii. 14.  
Gal. iii. 28.  
Acts x. 36.

Tit. iii. 4.  
John iii.  
16.

1 Tim. ii.  
5.

1 John ii.  
2.  
Heb. ii. 9.  
2 Cor. v.  
19.  
Col. i. 20.  
Eph. i. 10;  
ii. 13.

St Paul speaketh, *from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise.*) For thus the Law runneth in Leviticus, *Thou shalt not bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;* where plainly Jews and neighbours are terms equivalent; other men being supposed to stand at distance without the fold of politic enclosure, which God by several ordinances had fenced, to keep that nation unmixed and separate: nor can it be excepted against this notion, that in the same chapter it is enjoined, *But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself;* for by that stranger, (as the Jewish masters will interpret it,) is meant a proselyte of righteousness; or one who, although a stranger by birth, was yet a brother in Religion, having voluntarily submitted to their law, being engaged in the same covenant, and thence admitted to the same privileges, as an adopted child of that holy family.

But now, such distinctions of men being voided, and that wall of partition demolished, all the world is become one people; subject to the laws of one common Lord; and capable of the mercies purchased by one Redeemer. God's love to mankind did move him to send our Lord into the world, to assume human nature, and therein to become a mediator between God and men. Our Lord's kindness to all his brethren disposed him to undertake their salvation, and to expiate their sins, and, *To taste death for every man;* the effect whereof is an universal reconciliation of God to the world, and an union of men together.

Now the blood of Christ hath cemented mankind; the favour of God embracing all hath approximated and combined all together; so that now every man is our brother, not only by nature, as derived from the same stock, but by grace, as partaker of the common redemption; now God desiring the salvation of all men, and inviting all men to mercy, our duty must be co-extended with God's grace, and our charity must follow that of our Saviour.

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1 Tim. ii.  
Tit. ii. 11.  
Col. i. 23.

We are therefore now to all men, that which one Jew was to another; yea more than such, our Christianity having induced much higher obligations, stricter alliances, and stronger endearments, than were those, whereby Judaism did engage its followers to mutual amity. The duties of common humanity, (to which our natural frame and sense do incline us, which philosophy recommendeth and natural religion doth prescribe, being grounded upon our community of nature and cognation of blood, upon apparent equity, upon general convenience and utility,) our Religion doth not only enforce and confirm, but enhance and improve; superadding higher instances and faster ties of spiritual relation, reaching in a sort to all men, (as being in duty, in design, in remote capacity our spiritual brethren;) but in especial manner to all Christians, who actually are fellow members of the same holy fraternity, contracted by spiritual regeneration from one heavenly seed, supported by a common faith and hope, strengthened by communion in acts of devotion and charity.

1 Pet. i.  
23; ii. 17.

Hereon therefore are grounded those evangelical commands, explicatory of this law, as it now standeth

SERM. XXVII. in force; that, *As we have opportunity we should do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith; that, We should abound in love one towards another, and towards all men; that, We should glorify God in our professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, by liberally distributing to the saints, and to all men; that, We should follow peace with all men, should be patient toward all men; and, Gentle toward all men, and, Shew all meekness toward all men; and, Ever follow that which is good both among ourselves, and to all men; that, We should make supplications, intercessions, and thanksgivings for all men, especially for all saints, or all our fellow Christians; and, Express moderation, or ingenuity, to all men.*

Gal. vi. 10.  
1 Thess. iii. 12.  
2 Cor. ix. 12, 13.  
Heb. xii. 14.  
1 Thess. v. 14.  
Tit. iii. 2.  
2 Tim. ii. 24.  
1 Thess. v. 15.  
1 Tim. ii. 1.  
Eph. vi. 18.  
Phil. iv. 5.

Such is the object of our charity; and thus did our Lord himself expound it, when by a Jewish lawyer being put to resolve this question, *And who is my neighbour?* he did propound a case, or history, whereby he did extort from that Rabbi this confession, that even a Samaritan, discharging a notable office of humanity and mercy to a Jew, did thereby most truly approve himself a good neighbour to him<sup>b</sup>; and, consequently, that reciprocal performances of such offices were due from a Jew to a Samaritan; whence it might appear, that this relation of neighbourhood is universal and unlimited. So much for the object.

II. As for the qualification annexed and couched in those words, *As thyself*; that, as I conceive, may import both a rule declaring the nature, and a

<sup>b</sup> Πλησίον δὲ ἀνθρώπου οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστίν, ἢ τὸ ὁμοιοπαθὲς καὶ λογικὸν ζῶον, ὁ ἄνθρωπος.—Just. Mart. Dial. cum Tryph. [Opp p. 201 B.]

measure determining the quantity, of that love which is due from us to our neighbour; the comparative term *as* implying both conformity or similitude, and commensuration or equality<sup>c</sup>. SERM.  
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I Loving our neighbour as ourselves doth import a rule, directing what kind of love we should bear and exercise toward him; or informing us, that our charity doth consist in having the same affections of soul, and in performing the same acts of beneficence toward him, as we are ready by inclination, as we are wont in practice to have or to perform toward ourselves, with full approbation of our judgment and conscience, apprehending it just and reasonable so to do.

We cannot indeed better understand the nature of this duty, than by reflecting on the motions of our own heart, and observing the course of our demeanour toward ourselves; for thence infallibly we may be assured, how we should stand affected, and how we should behave ourselves toward others.

This is a peculiar advantage of this rule, (inferring the excellent wisdom and goodness of him who framed it,) that by it, very easily and certainly, we may discern all the specialties of our duty, without looking abroad or having recourse to external instructions<sup>d</sup>; so that by it we may be perfect lawgivers, and skilful judges, and faithful monitors to ourselves of what in any case we should do: for every one by internal experience knoweth what it

<sup>c</sup> Ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς φιλίας τῇ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ὁμοιοῦται.—Arist. Eth. ix. 4. [6.]

<sup>d</sup> Οὐ χρεία πολλῶν λόγων, οὐδὲ μακροτέρων νόμων, οὐδὲ διδασκαλίας ποικίλης· τὸ θέλημά σου γινέσθω νόμος—σὺ γένου δικαστῆς, σὺ γένου νομοθέτης τῆς σεαυτοῦ ζωῆς.—Chrys. Ἀνθρ. ιγ'. [Opp. Tom. vi. p. 549.]

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1 Thess.  
iv. 9.

Matt. vii.  
12.  
Luke vi.  
31.

is to love himself, every one is conscious how he useth to treat himself: each one consequently can prescribe and decide for himself, what he ought to do toward his neighbour: so that we are not only *Taught of God*, Θεοδιδάκτοι, as the apostle saith, *to love one another*; but *Αὐτοδιδάκτοι*, taught of ourselves how to exercise that duty: whence our Lord, otherwhere, doth propose the law of charity in these terms, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the law and the prophets*<sup>o</sup>; that is, unto this rule all the special precepts of charity proposed in holy scripture may be reduced.

Wherefore, for information concerning our duty in each case and circumstance, we need only thus to consult and interrogate ourselves, hence forming resolutions concerning our practice.

Do we not much esteem and set by ourselves? Do we not strive to maintain in our minds a good opinion of ourselves? Can any mischances befalling us, any defects observable in us, any faults committed by us, induce us to slight or despise ourselves?—This may teach us what regard and value we should ever preserve for our neighbour.

Do we not sincerely and earnestly desire our own welfare and advantage in every kind? Do we not heartily wish good success to our own designs and undertakings? Are we unconcerned or coldly affected in any case touching our own safety, our estate, our credit, our satisfaction or pleasure? Do we not especially, if we rightly understand ourselves, desire the health and happiness of our

<sup>o</sup> ὁ μισεῖς, μηδενὶ ποιήσης.—Tob. iv. 15. Cf. Const. Apost. i. 1. [Cotel. Pat. Apost. Tom. i. p. 200.]

souls?—This doth inform us, what we should wish and covet for our neighbour<sup>f</sup>. SERM.  
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Have we not a sensible delight and complacency in our own prosperity? (Do we ever repine at any advantages accruing to our person or condition?) Are we not extremely glad to find ourselves thriving and flourishing in wealth, in reputation, in any accommodation or ornament of our state? Especially, if we be sober and wise, doth not our spiritual proficiency and improvement in virtue yield joyous satisfaction to us? Are we not much comforted in apprehending ourselves to proceed in a hopeful way toward everlasting felicity?—This may instruct us what content we should feel in our neighbour's prosperity, both temporal and spiritual.

Do we not seriously grieve at our own disasters and disappointments? Are we not in sad dumps, whenever we incur any damage or disgrace? Do not our diseases and pains sorely afflict us? Do we not pity and bemoan ourselves in any want, calamity, or distress? Can we especially, if we are ourselves, without grievous displeasure apprehend ourselves enslaved to sin and Satan, destitute of God's favour, exposed to endless misery?—Hence may we learn, how we should condole and commiserate the misfortunes of our neighbour.

Do we not eagerly prosecute our own concerns? Do we not, with huge vigour and industry, strive to acquire all conveniences and comforts to ourselves, to rid ourselves of all wants and molestations? Is our solicitous care or painful endeavour

<sup>f</sup> 'Ο τὸν πλησίον ὡς ἑαυτὸν ἀγαπῶν, ἅπερ αὐτῷ βούλεται ἀγαθὰ, καὶ κείνῳ βουλήσεται. &c.—Just. Mart. Dial. cum Tryph. [Opp. p. 201 B.]



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ever wanting toward the support and succour of ourselves in any of our needs? Are we satisfied in merely wishing ourselves well? are we not also busy and active in procuring what we affect? Especially, if we are well advised, do we not effectually provide for the weal of our soul, and supply of our spiritual necessities; labouring to rescue ourselves from ignorance and error, from the tyranny of sin, from the torture of a bad conscience, from the danger of hell?—This sheweth how ready we should be really to further our neighbour's good, ministering to him all kinds of assistance and relief suitable to his needs, both corporal and spiritual.

Are we so proud or nice, that we disdain to yield attendance or service needful for our own sustenance or convenience? do we not indeed gladly perform the meanest and most sordid offices for ourselves?—This declareth how condescensive we should be in helping our neighbour, how ready even

John xiii.  
14.

to wash his feet, when occasion doth require.

Do we love to vex ourselves, or cross our own humour? do we not rather seek by all means to please and gratify ourselves?—This may warn us how innocent and inoffensive, how compliant and complacent we should be in our behaviour toward others; endeavouring, *To please them in all things, especially for their good to edification.*

Rom. xv.  
2.

Are we easily angry with ourselves, do we retain implacable grudges against ourselves, or do we execute upon ourselves mischievous revenge? are we not rather very meek and patient toward ourselves, mildly comporting with our own great weaknesses, our troublesome humours, our impertinences and follies; readily forgiving ourselves the most heinous

offences, neglects, affronts, injuries, and outrages committed by us against our own interest, honour, and welfare?—Hence may we derive lessons of meekness and patience, to be exercised toward our neighbour, in bearing his infirmities and miscarriages, in remitting any wrongs or discourtesies received from him.

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Are we apt to be rude in our deportment, harsh in our language, or rigorous in our dealing toward ourselves? do we not rather in word and deed treat ourselves very softly, very indulgently? Do we use to pry for faults, or to pick quarrels with ourselves, to carp at any thing said or done by us, rashly or upon slight grounds to charge blame on ourselves, to lay heavy censures on our actions, to make foul constructions of our words, to blazon our defects, or aggravate our failings? do we not rather connive at and conceal our blemishes? do we not excuse and extenuate our own crimes?

Can we find in our hearts to frame virulent invectives, or to dart bitter taunts and scoffs against ourselves; to murder our own credit by slander, to blast it by detraction, to maim it by reproach, to prostitute it to be defloured by jeering and scurrilous abuse? are we not rather very jealous of our reputation, and studious to preserve it, as a precious ornament, a main fence, an useful instrument of our welfare?

Do we delight to report, or like to hear ill stories of ourselves? do we not rather endeavour all we can to stifle them; to tie the tongues and stop the ears of men against them?—Hence may we be acquainted how civil and courteous in our behaviour, how fair and ingenuous in our dealing, how candid

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and mild in our judgment or censure, we should be toward our neighbour ; how very tender and careful we should be of anywise wronging or hurting his fame.

Thus reflecting on ourselves, and making our practice toward ourselves the pattern of our dealing with others, we shall not fail to discharge what is prescribed to us in this law : and so we have here a rule of charity. But further,

2 Loving our neighbour as ourselves doth also import the measure of our love toward him ; that it should be commensurate and equal in degree to that love, which we bear and exercise toward ourselves. St Peter once and again doth exhort us, *To love one another ἐκτενῶς, with an outstretched affection:* and how far that affection should be stretched we are here informed ; even that it should reach the furthest that can be, or to a parity with that intense love, which we do bear in heart, and express in performance toward ourselves : so that we do either bring down our self-love to such a moderation, or raise up our charity to such a fervency, that both come to be adjusted in the same even level. This is that pitch, at which we should aim and aspire ; this is that perfection of charity, which our Lord recommendeth to us in that injunction, *Be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

Matt. v.  
48.

1 Pet. i.  
22 ; iv. 8.  
*fervently*  
*or*

That this sense of the words is included, yea chiefly intended, divers reasons will evince : For,

1 The most natural signification and common use of the phrase doth import thus much ; and any one, at first hearing, would so understand the words.

2 It appeareth by comparing this precept with that to which it is annexed, of loving God with all our heart and all our soul; which manifestly designeth the quantity and degree of that love: consequently the like determination is intended in this precept, which is expressed to resemble that, or designed in like manner to qualify and bound our duty toward our neighbour.

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3 If the law doth not signify thus much, it doth hardly signify any thing; not at least any thing of direction or use to us: for no man is ignorant, that he is obliged to love his neighbour, but how far that love must extend is the point, wherein most of us do need to be resolved, and without satisfaction in which, we shall hardly do any thing: for as he that oweth money will not pay except he can tell how much it is; so to know the duty will not avail toward effectual observance of it, if its measure be not fixed.

4 Indeed, the law otherwise understood will rather be apt to misguide than to direct us; inducing us to apprehend, that we shall satisfy its intent, and sufficiently discharge our duty, by practising charity in any low degree or mean instance. Also,

5 The former sense, which is unquestionable, doth infer and establish this; because similitude of love, morally speaking, cannot consist with inequality thereof: for if in considerable degrees we love ourselves more than others, assuredly we shall fail both in exerting such internal acts of affection, and in performing such external offices of kindness toward them, as we do exert and perform in regard to ourselves; whence this law, taken merely as a

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rule, demanding a confused and imperfect similitude of practice, will have no clear obligation or certain efficacy.

6 But further to assure this exposition, I shall declare, that the duty, thus interpreted, is agreeable to reason, and may justly be required of us upon considerations, which together will serve to press the observance of it, according to such measure.

1 It is reasonable, that we should thus love our neighbour as ourselves, because he is as ourselves, or really, in all considerable respects, the same with us: we concur with him in all that is necessary, substantial, and stable; we differ from him only in things contingent, circumstantial, and variable; in the which, of course or by chance we are liable in a small time as much to differ from ourselves: in such respects we are not the same to-day that we were yesterday, and shall be to-morrow; for we shift our circumstances as we do our clothes; our bodies are in continual flux, and our souls do much conform to their alteration; our temper and complexion do vary with our air, our diet, our conversation, our fortunes, our age; our parts grow and decay, our principles and judgments, our affections and desires are never fixed, and seldom rest long in the same place; all our outward state doth easily change face: so that if we consider the same person in youth and in age, in health and in sickness, in prosperity and in distress, may we not say, *Quantum mutatus ab illo*<sup>s</sup>; how quite another man is he grown! Yet shall a man for such alterations surcease or abate his love to himself?—Why then, in regard to the like differences, shall we less affect

<sup>s</sup> [Virg. *Æn.* II. 274.]

our neighbour, who is endowed with that common nature, which alone through all those vicissitudes sticketh fast in us; who is the most express image of us, (or rather a copy, drawn by the same hand, of the same original,) another self, attired in a diverse garb of circumstances? Do we not, so far as we despise or disaffect him, by consequence slight or hate ourselves; seeing (except bare personality, or I know not what metaphysical identity) there is nothing in him different from what is, or what may be in us?

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2 It is just that we should love our neighbour equally with ourselves, because he really no less deserveth love, or because upon a fair judgment he will appear equally amiable. Justice is impartial, and regardeth things as they are in themselves, abstracting from their relation to this or that person; whence, if our neighbour seem worthy of affection no less than we, it demandeth that accordingly we should love him no less.

And what ground can there be of loving ourselves, which may not as well be found in others? Is it endowments of nature, is it accomplishments of knowledge, is it ornaments of virtue, is it accoutrements of fortune? But is not our neighbour possessed of the same? is he not at least capable of them, the collation and acquist of them depending on the same arbitrary bounty of God, or upon faculties and means commonly dispensed to all? May not any man at least be as wise and as good as we?—Why then should we not esteem, why not affect him as much? Doth relation to us alter the case? is self, as self, lovely or valuable? doth that respect lend any worth or price to things?

1 Cor. iv.  
6, 7.

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Likewise, what more can justice find in our neighbour to obstruct or depress our love than it may observe in ourselves? hath he greater infirmities or defects, is he more liable to errors and miscarriages, is he guilty of worse faults than we? If, without arrogance and vanity, we cannot affirm this, then are we as unworthy of love as he can be; and refusing any degree thereof to him, we may as reasonably withdraw the same from ourselves.

3 It is fit that we should be obliged to love our neighbour equally with ourselves, because all charity beneath self-love is defective, and all self-love above charity is excessive.

It is an imperfect charity which doth not respect our neighbour according to his utmost merit and worth, which doth not heartily desire his good, which doth not earnestly promote his advantage in every kind, according to our ability and opportunity: and what beyond this can we do for ourselves?

If, in kind or degree, we transcend this, it is not virtuous love or true friendship to ourselves, but a vain fondness or perverse dotage; proceeding from inordinate dispositions of soul, grounded on foolish conceits, begetting foul qualities and practices; envy, rancour, strife, ambition, avarice, contentiousness, and the like.

4 Equity requireth that we should love our neighbour to this degree, because we are apt to claim the same measure of love from others. No mean respect or slight affection will satisfy us; we cannot brook the least disregard or coldness; to love us a little is all one to us as not to love

us at all : it is therefore equitable that we should be engaged to the same height of charity toward others ; otherwise we should be allowed in our dealings to use double weights and measures, which is plain iniquity : what indeed can be more ridiculously absurd, than that we should pretend to receive that from others, which we are not disposed to yield to them, upon the same ground and title ?

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Prov. xx.  
10.

5 It is needful that so great a charity should be prescribed, because none inferior thereto will reach divers weighty ends designed in this law ; namely, the general convenience and comfort of our lives in mutual society and intercourse : for if, in considerable degree, we do affect ourselves beyond others, we shall be continually bickering and clashing with them about points of interest and credit ; scrambling with them for what may be had, and clambering to get over them in power and dignity : whence all the passions annoying our souls, and all the mischiefs disturbing our lives, must needs ensue.

6 That entire love which we owe to God our Creator, and to Christ our Redeemer, doth exact from us no less a measure of charity than this : for seeing they have so clearly demonstrated themselves to bear an immense love to men, and have charged us therein to imitate them ; it becometh us, in conformity, in duty, in gratitude to them, to bear the highest we can, that is, the same as we bear to ourselves : for how can we love God enough, or with all our soul, if we do not accord with him in loving his friends and relations, his servants, his children, with most entire affection ?



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If in God's judgment they are equal to us, if in his affection and care they have an equal share, if he in all his dealings is indifferent and impartial toward all; how can our judgment, our affection, our behaviour be right, if they do not conspire with him in the same measures?

7 Indeed the whole tenor and genius of our Religion do imply obligation to this pitch of charity, upon various accounts.

It representeth all worldly goods and matters of private interest as very inconsiderable and unworthy of our affection, thereby subtracting the fuel of immoderate self-love.

It enjoineth us for all our particular concerns entirely to rely upon Providence; so barring solicitude for ourselves, and disposing an equal care for others.

It declareth every man so weak, so vile, so wretched, so guilty of sin and subject to misery, (so for all good wholly indebted to the pure grace and mercy of God,) that no man can have reason to dote on himself, or to prefer himself before others: we need not cark, or prog, or scrape for ourselves, being assured that God sufficiently careth for us.

In its account the fruits and recompenses of love to others, in advantage to ourselves, do far surpass all present interests and enjoyments: whence in effect the more or less we love others, answerably the more or less we love ourselves; so that charity and self-love become coincident, and both run together evenly in one channel.

Matt. v.  
45.

It recommendeth to us the imitation of God's love and bounty; which are absolutely pure, with-

out any regard, any capacity of benefit redounding to himself. SERM.  
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It commandeth us heartily to love even our bitterest enemies and most cruel persecutors; which cannot be performed without a proportionable abatement of self-love.

It chargeth us not only freely to impart our substance, but willingly to expose our lives, for the good of our brethren: in which case charity doth plainly match self-love; for what hath a man more dear or precious than his life to lay out for himself? 1 John iii.  
16.

It representeth all men (considering their divine extraction, and being formed after God's image: their designation for eternal glory and happiness, their partaking of the common redemption by the undertakings and sufferings of Christ, their being objects of God's tender affection and care) so very considerable, that no regard beneath the highest will befit them.

It also declareth us so nearly allied to them, and so greatly concerned in their good, (*We being all one in Christ, and members one of another,*) that we ought to have a perfect complacency in their welfare, and a sympathy in their adversity, as our own. Gal. iii. 28.  
John xvii.  
21.  
Rom. xii.  
5.  
1 Cor. xii.  
26.  
John xiii.  
35.

It condemneth self-love, self-pleasing, self-seeking, as great faults; which yet (even in the highest excess) do not seem absolutely bad; or otherwise culpable, than as including partiality, or detracting from that equal measure of charity which we owe to others: for surely we cannot love ourselves too much, if we love others equally with ourselves; we cannot seek our own good exces- 2 Tim. iii.  
2.  
Rom. xv.  
1.  
Phil. ii. 4.  
1 Cor. x.  
24; xiii. 5.

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sively, if, with the same earnestness, we seek the good of others.

It exhibiteth supernatural aids of grace, and conferreth that holy spirit of love, which can serve to no meaner purposes, than to quell that sorry principle of niggardly selfishness, to which corrupt nature doth incline; and to enlarge our hearts to this divine extent of goodness.

8 Lastly, many conspicuous examples, proposed for our direction in this kind of practice, do imply this degree of charity to be required of us.

It may be objected to our discourse, that the duty thus understood is unpracticable, nature violently swaying to those degrees of self-love which charity can nowise reach. This exception (would time permit) I should assoil, by shewing how far, and by what means we may attain to such a practice; (how at least, by aiming at this top of perfection, we may ascend nearer and nearer thereto:) in the mean time experience doth sufficiently evince possibility; and assuredly that may be done, which we see done before us. And so it is, pure charity hath been the root of such affections and such performances (recorded by indubitable testimony) toward others, which hardly any man can exceed in regard to himself: nor indeed hath there scarce ever appeared any heroical virtue or memorable piety, whereof charity, overbearing selfishness and sacrificing private interest to public benefit, hath not been a main ingredient. For instance then:

Did not Abraham<sup>h</sup> even prefer the good of others before his own, when he gladly did quit his

<sup>h</sup> Vid. Chrys. in 1 Cor. Orat. xxv. [Opp. Tom. III. p. 404.]

country, patrimony, friends, and kindred, to pass his days in a wandering pilgrimage, upon no other encouragement than an overture of blessing on his posterity? SERM.  
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Did not the charity of Moses stretch thus far, when, for the sake of his brethren, he voluntarily did exchange the splendours and delights of a court for a condition of vagrancy and servility; *Choosing rather, as the apostle speaketh, to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin?* did not it overstretch, when (although having been grievously affronted by them) he wished, that rather his name should be expunged from God's book, than that their sin should abide unpardoned<sup>1</sup>? Heb. xi.  
25.  
Exod.  
xxxii. 32.

Did not Samuel exercise such a charity, when, being ingratefully and injuriously dismounted from his authority, he did yet retain toward that people a zealous desire of their welfare, not ceasing earnestly to pray for them? I Sam. xii.  
23.

Did not Jonathan love David equally with himself, when, for his sake, he chose to incur the displeasure of his father and his king; when, for his advantage, he was content to forfeit the privilege of his birth, and the inheritance of a crown; when he could, without envy or grudge, look on the growing prosperity of his supplanter, could heartily wish his safety, could effectually protect it, could purchase it to him with his own great danger and trouble: when he, that in gallantry of courage and virtue did yield to none, was yet willing to become inferior to one born his subject, one raised from the I Sam. xx.  
30.

<sup>1</sup> Βούλομαι μετ' ἐκείνων ἀπολέσθαι, φησὶν, ἢ χωρὶς ἐκείνων σώζεσθαι. ὄντως μανία, ὄντως ἔρως μέγας.—Id. in Eph. Orat. vii. [ibid. p. 798.]

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Ps. lxxviii.  
70.

1 Sam.  
xxiii. 17.

xviii. 1;  
xx. 17.

dust, one taken from the sheepcote; so that, unrepiningly and without disdain, he could say, *Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee*—are not these pregnant evidences, that it was truly said in the story, *The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul?*

Ps. xxxv.  
13, 14.

Did not the Psalmist competently practise this duty, when, in the sickness of his ingrateful adversaries, *He clothed himself with sackcloth, he humbled his soul with fasting; he bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother?*

Were not Elias, Jeremy, and other Prophets, as much concerned for the good of their countrymen as for their own, when they took such pains, when they ran such hazards, when they endured such hardships not only for them, but from them; being requited with hatred and misusage for endeavouring to reclaim them from sin, and stop them from ruin?

May not the holy Apostles seem to have loved mankind beyond themselves, when, for its instruction and reformation, for reconciling it to God, and procuring its salvation, they gladly did undertake and undergo so many rough difficulties, so many formidable dangers, such irksome pains and troubles, such extreme wants and losses, such grievous ignominies and disgraces; slighting all concerns of their own, and relinquishing whatever was most dear to them (their safety, their liberty, their ease, their estate, their reputation, their pleasure, their very blood and breath) for the welfare of others; even of those, who did spitefully malign and cruelly abuse them?

Survey but the life of one among them; mark SERM. XXVII.  
the wearisome travels he underwent over all the  
earth, the solicitous cares which did possess his  
mind for all the churches; the continual toils and 2 Cor. xi. 28.  
drudgeries sustained by him in preaching by word  
and writing, in visiting, in admonishing, in all pas-  
toral employments; the imprisonments, the stripes, 2 Cor. xi. 23; iv. 8.  
the reproaches, the oppositions and persecutions of 1 Cor. iv. 11.  
every kind, and from all sorts of people, which he  
suffered; the pinching wants, the desperate haz-  
ards, the lamentable distresses with the which he  
did ever conflict: peruse those black catalogues of  
his afflictions registered by himself; then tell me  
how much his charity was inferior to his self-love?  
did not at least the one vie with the other, when  
he, for the benefit of his disciples, was content to  
be absent from the Lord, or suspended from a Phil. i. 24.  
certain fruition of glorious beatitude; resting in 2 Cor. v. 1, &c.  
this uncomfortable state, in this fleshly tabernacle  
wherein he groaned, being burdened, and long-  
ing for enlargement? Did he not somewhat be-  
yond himself love those men, for whose salvation,  
*He wished himself accursed from Christ*, or debar- Rom. ix. 3.  
red from the assured enjoyment of eternal felicity;  
those very men by whom he had been stoned, had 2 Cor. xi. 24, 25.  
been scourged, had been often beaten to extremity, 1 Thess. ii. 15.  
from whom he had received manifold indignities  
and outrages?

Did not they love their neighbours as them- Acts iv. 34.  
selves, who sold their possessions, and distributed  
the prices of them for relief of their indigent bre-  
thren? Did not most of the ancient Saints and Fa-  
thers mount near the top of this duty, of whom it  
is by unquestionable records testified, that they did

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freely bestow all their private estate and substance on the poor, devoting themselves to the service of God and edification of his people? Finally,

Did not our Lord himself in our nature exemplify this duty, yea by his practice far outdo his precept? For he, who from the brightest glories, from the immense riches, from the ineffable joys and felicities of his celestial kingdom, did willingly stoop down to assume the garb of a servant, to be clothed with the infirmities of flesh, to become, *A man of sorrow and acquainted with grief*: he, who for our sake vouchsafed to live in extreme penury and disgrace, to feel hard want, sore travail, bitter persecution, most grievous shame and anguish: he, who not only did contentedly bear, but purposely did choose to be accused, to be slandered, to be reviled, to be mocked, to be tortured, to pour forth his heart-blood upon a cross, for the sake of an unprofitable, an unworthy, an impious, an ingrateful generation; for the salvation of his open enemies, of base apostates, of perverse rebels, of villanous traitors: he, who, in the height of his mortal agonies, did sue for the pardon of his cruel murderers<sup>k</sup>; who did send his apostles to them, did cause so many wonders to be done before them, did furnish all means requisite to convert and save them: he that acted and suffered all this, and more than can be expressed, with perfect frankness and good-will; did he not signally love his neighbour as himself, to the utmost measure? did not in him virtue conquer nature, and charity triumph over self-love? This he did to seal and impress his doc-

Isai. liii. 3.

Rom. v. 6,  
8, 10.  
1 Pet. iii.  
18.  
Eph. ii. 1.  
Col. ii. 13.

Heb. xii.  
2.

<sup>k</sup> Vid. Chrys. in Eph. Orat. vii. [Opp. Tom. iii. p. 798.] In 1 Cor. Orat. xxxii. [Ibid. p. 458.]

trine; to shew us what we should do, and what we can do by his grace; to oblige us and to encourage us unto a conformity with him in this respect; for, *Walk in love, saith the apostle, as Christ hath also loved us, and hath given himself for us; and, This, saith he himself, is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you:* and how can I better conclude, than in the recommendation of such an example?

*Now, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.*

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Eph. v. 2.  
1 John iii.  
16.  
John xv.  
12;  
xiii. 34.

2 Thess. ii.  
16, 17.



SERMON XXVIII.  
OF THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

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MATT. XXII. 39.

*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

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I HAVE formerly discoursed on these words, and then shewed how they do import two observable particulars: first a rule of our charity, or that it should be like in nature; then a measure of it, or that it should be equal in degree to the love, which we do bear to ourselves. Of this latter interpretation I did assign divers reasons, urging the observance of the precept according to that notion: but one material point, scantiness of time would not allow me to consider; which is the removal of an exception, to which that interpretation is very liable, and which is apt to discourage from a serious application to the practice of this duty so expounded.

If, it may be said, the precept be thus understood, as to oblige us to love our neighbours equally with ourselves, it will prove unpracticable, such a charity being merely romantic and imaginary; for who doth, who can love his neighbour in this degree? Nature powerfully doth resist, common sense plainly doth forbid that we should do so: a natural instinct doth prompt us to love ourselves, and we are forcibly driven thereto by an unavoidable sense of

pleasure and pain, resulting from the constitution of our body and soul, so that our own least good or evil are very sensible to us: whereas we have no such potent inclination to love others; we have no sense, or a very faint one, of what another doth enjoy or endure: doth not therefore nature plainly suggest, that our neighbour's good cannot be so considerable to us as our own? especially, when charity doth clash with self-love, or when there is a competition between our neighbour's interest and our own, is it possible that we should not be partial to our own side? is not therefore this precept such, as if we should be commanded to fly, or to do that, which natural propension will certainly hinder?

In answer to this exception I say, First,

I Be it so, that we can never attain to love our neighbour altogether so much as ourselves, yet may it be reasonable that we should be enjoined to do so; for

Laws must not be depressed to our imperfection, nor rules bent to our obliquity: but we must ascend toward the perfection of them, and strive to conform our practice to their exactness. If what is prescribed be according to the reason of things just and fit, it is enough, although our practice will not reach it; for what remaineth may be supplied by repentance and humility in him that should obey, by mercy and pardon in him that doth command.

In the prescription of duty it is just, that what may be required, even in rigour, should be precisely determined, though, in execution of justice or dispensation of recompense, consideration may be had

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of our weakness; whereby both the authority of our governor may be maintained, and his clemency glorified.

It is of great use, that by comparing the law with our practice, and in the perfection of the one discerning the defect of the other, we may be humbled, may be sensible of our impotency, may thence be forced to seek the helps of grace, and the benefit of mercy.

Were the rule never so low, our practice would come beneath it; it is therefore expedient that it should be high, that at least we may rise higher in performance than otherwise we should do: for the higher we aim, the nearer we shall go to the due pitch; as he that aimeth at heaven, although he cannot reach it, will yet shoot higher than he that aimeth only at the housetop.

Phil. iii.  
12.

The height of duty doth prevent sloth and decay in virtue, keeping us in wholesome exercise and in continual improvement, while we be always climbing toward the top, and straining unto further attainment: the sincere prosecution of which course, as it will be more profitable unto us, so it will be no less acceptable to God, than if we could thoroughly fulfil the law; for in judgment God will only reckon upon the sincerity and earnestness of our endeavour: so that if we have done our best, it will

1 Cor. xv.  
58.

be taken as if we had done all. *Our labour will not be lost in the Lord;* for the degrees of perform-

Heb. vi.  
10.

ance will be considered, and he, that hath done his duty in part, shall be proportionably recompensed;

1 Cor. iii.  
8.

according to that of St Paul, *Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own work.*

Matt. v.  
48; xix. 21.

Hence sometimes we are enjoined, *To be perfect as*

*our heavenly Father is perfect, and, To be holy as God is holy; otherwhile, To go on to perfection, and, To press toward the mark;* which precepts in effect do import the same thing; but the latter implieth the former, although in attainment impossible, yet in attempt very profitable: and surely he is likely to write best, who proposeth to himself the fairest copy for his imitation.

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1 Pet. i.  
16.  
Col. iv. 12.  
Heb. vi. 1.  
Phil. iii.  
14.

In fine, if we do act what is possible, or, as we can, do conform to the rule of duty, we may be sure that no impossibility of this, or of any other sublime law, can prejudice us.

I say, of any other law; for it is not only this law, to which this exception may be made, but many others, perhaps every one evangelical law, are alike repugnant to corrupt nature, and seem to surmount our ability.

But neither is the performance of this task so impossible, or so desperately hard, (if we take the right course, and use proper means toward it,) as is supposed: as may somewhat appear, if we will weigh the following considerations.

I Be it considered, that we may be mistaken in our account, when we do look on the impossibility or difficulty of such a practice, as it appeareth at present, before we have seriously attempted, and in a good method by due means earnestly laboured to achieve it: for many things cannot be done at first, or with a small practice, which by degrees and a continued endeavour may be effected; divers things are placed at a distance, so that, without passing through the interjacent way, we cannot arrive at them; divers things seem hard before trial, which afterward prove very easy: it is impossible to fly

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up to the top of a steeple, but we may ascend thither by steps; we cannot get to Rome without crossing the seas, and travelling through France or Germany; it is hard to comprehend a subtle theorem in geometry, if we pitch on it first; but, if we begin at the simple principles, and go forward through the intermediate propositions, we may easily attain a demonstration of it: it is hard to swim, to dance, to play on an instrument; but a little trial or a competent exercise will render those things easy to us: so may the practice of this duty seem impossible, or insuperably difficult, before we have employed divers means, and voided divers impediments; before we have inured our minds and affections to it; before we have tried our forces in some instances thereof, previous to others of a higher strain, and nearer the perfection of it.

If we would set ourselves to exercise charity in those instances, whereof we are at first capable, without much reluctancy, and thence proceed toward others of a higher nature, we may find such improvement, and taste such content therein, that we may soon arise to incredible degrees thereof; and at length, perhaps, we may attain to such a pitch, that it will seem to us base and vain to consider our own good before that of others, in any sensible measure; and that nature, which now so mightily doth contest in favour of ourselves, may in time give way to a better nature, born of custom, affecting the good of others. Let not therefore a present sense or experience raise in our minds a prejudice against the possibility or practicableness of this duty.

2 Let us consider, that in some respects and

in divers instances, it is very feasible to love our neighbour no less than ourselves. SERM.  
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We may love our neighbour truly and sincerely, *Out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith* 1 Tim. i. 5. *unfeigned*, as St Paul doth prescribe; or, according to St Peter's injunction, *From a pure heart love one another fervently*: and in this respect we can do no 1 Pet. i. 22.  
Rom. xii. 9. more toward ourselves; for truth admitteth no degrees, sincerity is a pure and complete thing, exclusive of all mixture or allay.

And as to external acts at least it is plain, that charity toward others may reach self-love; for we may be as serious, as vigorous, as industrious in acting for our neighbour's good, as we can be in pursuing our own designs and interests: for reason easily can manage and govern external practice; and common experience sheweth the matter to this extent practicable, seeing that often men do employ as much diligence on the concerns of others, as they can do on their own, (being able to do no more than their best in either case:) wherefore in this respect, charity may vie with selfishness; and practising thus far may be a step to mount higher.

Also rational consideration will enable us to perform some interior acts of charity in the highest degree; for if we do but (as without much difficulty we may do) apply our mind to weigh the qualities and the actions of our neighbour, we may thence obtain a true opinion and just esteem of him; and, secluding gross folly or flattery of ourselves, how can we in that respect or instance be more kind or benign to ourselves?

Is it not also within the compass of our ability to repress those passions of soul, the eruption

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10.

whereof tendeth to the wrong, damage, and offence of our neighbour; in regard to which practice St Paul affirmeth, that the law may be fulfilled: *Love, saith he, worketh no evil to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law?* And what more in this respect can we perform for ourselves?

3 We may consider, that commonly we see men inclined by other principles to act as much or more for the sake of others, as they would for themselves.

Moral honesty hath inclined some, ambition and popularity have excited others, to encounter the greatest dangers, to attack the greatest difficulties, to expose their safety, to sacrifice their lives for the welfare of their country<sup>a</sup>.

Common friendship hath often done as much, and brutish love (that *Mad friendship*, as Seneca<sup>b</sup> calleth it) commonly doeth far more: for what will not a fond lover undertake and achieve for his minion, although she really be the worst enemy he can have? yet for such a snake will he not lavish his estate, prostitute his honour, abandon his ease, hazard his safety, shipwreck his conscience, forfeit his salvation<sup>c</sup>? What may not a Delilah obtain of her Samson, a Cleopatra of her Anthony, how prejudicial soever it be to his own interest and welfare?

Why then may not a principle of charity, grounded on so much better reason, and backed by so much stronger motives, be conceived able to engage men to the like practice? why may not a man

<sup>a</sup> Ἀληθὲς δὲ τὸ περὶ τοῦ σπουδαίου, καὶ τὸ τῶν φίλων ἕνεκα πολλὰ πράττειν καὶ τῆς πατρίδος, κἂν δέη ὑπεραποθνήσκειν.—Arist. Eth. ix. 8. [9.]

<sup>b</sup> Insana amicitia.—Sen. Ep. ix. [9.]

<sup>c</sup> Vid. Chrys. in Eph. Orat. vii. [Opp. Tom. iii. p. 797.]

be disposed to do that out of a hearty good-will, which he can do out of vain conceit or vicious appetite? why shall other forces overbear nature, and the power of charity be unable to match it? SERM.  
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4 Let us consider, that those dispositions of soul, which usually with so much violence do thwart the observance of this precept, are not ingredients of true self-love, by the which we are directed to regulate our charity; but a spurious brood of our folly and pravity, which imply not a sober love of ourselves, but a corrupt fondness toward an idol of our fancy mistaken for ourselves.

A high conceit of our worth or ability, of our fortune or worldly state, of our works and achievements; a great complacency or confidence in some endowment or advantage belonging to us, a stiff adherence to our own will or humour, a greedy appetite to some particular interest or base pleasure; these are those, not attendants of natural self-love, but issues of unnatural depravedness in judgment and affections, which render our practice so exorbitant in this regard, making us seem to love ourselves so immoderately, so infinitely; so contracting our souls, and drawing them inwards, that we appear indisposed to love our neighbour in any considerable degree: if these (as by serious consideration they may be) were avoided, or much abated, it would not be found so grievous a matter to love our neighbour as ourselves; for that sober love remaining behind, to which nature inclineth, and which reason approveth, would rather help to promote than yield any obstacle to our charity: if such perverse selfishness were checked and depressed, and natural kindness cherished and advanced, then true self-love



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and charity would compose themselves into near a just poise.

5 Indeed, (which we may further consider,) our nature is not so absolutely averse or indisposed to the practice of such charity, as to those may seem who view it slightly, either in some particular instances, or in ordinary practice: nature hath furnished us with strong instincts for the defence and sustenance of our life; and common practice is depraved by ill education and custom: these some men poring on do imagine no room left for charity in the constitution of men; but they consider not, that one of these may be so moderated, and the other so corrected, that charity may have a fair scope in men's hearts and practice; and they slip over divers pregnant marks of our natural inclination thereto.

Man having received his soul from the breath of God, and being framed after the image of his most benign parent, there do yet abide in him some features resembling God, and relics of the divine original; there are in us seeds of ingenuity, of equity, of pity, of benignity, which being cultivated by sober consideration and good use, under the conduct and aid of heavenly grace, will produce noble fruits of charity.

The frame of our nature so far disposeth us thereto, that our bowels are touched with sensible pain upon the view of any calamitous object: our fancy is disturbed at the report of any disaster befalling any person; we can hardly see or read a tragedy without <sup>emotions</sup> ~~motions~~ of compassion.

The practice of benignity, of courtesy, of clemency at first sight, without any discursive reflection, doth obtain approbation and applause from us; being no

less grateful and amiable to the mind, than beauty to our eyes, harmony to our ears, fragrancy to our smell, and sweetness to our palate: and to the same mental sense malignity, cruelty, harshness, all kinds of uncharitable dealing are very disgusting and loathsome.

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There wanteth not any commendation to procure a respect for charity<sup>d</sup>, nor any invective to breed abhorrence of uncharitableness; nature sufficiently prompting to favour the one, and to detest the other.

The practice of the former in common language hath ever been styled humanity; and the disposition from whence it floweth is called good-nature: the practice of the latter is likewise termed inhumanity, and its source ill nature; as thwarting the common notions and inclinations of mankind, divesting us of our manhood, and rendering us a sort of monsters among men.

No quality hath a clearer repute, or is commonly more admired, than generosity, which is a kind of natural charity, or hath a great spice thereof: no disposition is more despised among men than niggardly selfishness; whence commonly men are ashamed to avow self-interest as a principle of their actions, (rather fathering them on some other causes,) as being conscious to themselves that it is the basest of all principles<sup>e</sup>.

Whatever the censurers and detractors of human nature do pretend, yet even themselves do admire

<sup>d</sup> Ὅθεν τοὺς φιланθρώπους ἐπαινοῦμεν.—Arist. Eth. viii. 1. [3.]

<sup>e</sup> Ἐπιτιμῶσι γὰρ τοῖς ἑαυτοὺς μάλιστα ἀγαπῶσι, καὶ ὡς ἐν αἰσχρῷ φιλαύτους ἀποκαλοῦσι.—Id. ibid. ix. 8, 1.

Ὁ δὲ ἐπιεικὴς διὰ τὸ καλὸν, καὶ ὅσῳ ἂν βελτίον ᾖ, μᾶλλον διὰ τὸ καλὸν, καὶ φίλου ἕνεκα τὸ δ' αὐτοῦ παρίησι.—Id. ibid.

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pure beneficence, and condemn selfishness; for if we look to the bottom of their intent, it is hence they are bent to slander mankind as void of good nature, because out of malignity they would not allow it a quality so excellent and divine.

Wherefore, according to the general judgment and conscience of men, (to omit other considerations,) our nature is not so averse from charity, or destitute of propensions thereto; and therefore cherishing the natural seeds of it, we may improve it to higher degrees.

6 But supposing the inclinations of nature, as it now standeth in its depraved and crazy state, do so mightily obstruct the practice of this duty in the degree specified, so that however we cannot by any force of reason or philosophy attain to desire so much, or relish so well, the good of others as our own; yet we must remember, that a subsidiary power is by the divine mercy dispensed, able to control and subdue nature to a compliance, to raise our practice above our natural forces. We have a like averseness to other spiritual duties, (to the loving God with all our hearts, to the mortifying our flesh and carnal desires, to the contempt of worldly things, and placing our happiness in spiritual goods;) yet we are able to perform them by the succour of grace, and in virtue of that omnipotency which St Paul assumed to himself when he said, *I can do all things by Christ enabling me*, 'Εν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με Χριστῷ.

Phil. iv.  
13.

2 Tim. i. 7.

If we can get, *The Spirit of love*, (and assuredly we may get it, if we carefully will seek it, with constant fervency imploring it from him, who hath promised to bestow it on those that ask it,) it will

infuse into our minds that light, whereby we shall discern the excellency of this duty, together with the folly and baseness of that selfishness which crosseth it; it will kindle in our hearts charitable affections, disposing us to wish all good to our neighbour, and to feel pleasure therein; it will render us, *Partakers of that divine nature*, which so will guide and urge us in due measure to affect the benefit of others, as now corrupt nature doth move us unmeasurably to covet our own; being supported and elevated by its virtue, we may, surmounting the clogs of fleshly sense and conceit, soar up to the due pitch of charity; being, Θεοδιδάκτοι, *Taught of God to love one another*: and endowed with, *The fruits of the Spirit, which are love, gentleness, goodness, meekness*; and, *Created according to God in Christ Jesus* to the practice of answerable good works.

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2 Pet. i. 4.

1 Thess.  
iv. 9.  
Gal. v. 22.  
Eph. v. 9.  
Col. iii.

12.  
Eph. iv.  
24; ii. 10.

7 There are divers means conducive to the abatement of difficulty in this practice, which I shall propose, referring the matter to issue upon due trial of them.

1 Let us carefully weigh the value of those things, which immoderate self-love doth affect in prejudice to charity, together with the worth of those, which charity doth set in balance to them.

Aristotle himself doth observe, that the ground of culpable self-love, scraping, scrambling, scuffling for particular interest, is men's high esteem and passion for, and greedy appetite of wealth, of honours, of corporeal pleasures: whereas virtuous persons, not admiring those things, will constantly act for honesty sake, and out of love to their friends or country; wherein, although they most really

SERM. XXVIII. benefit and truly gratify themselves, yet are they not blamed for selfishness<sup>1</sup>.

And so indeed it is: if we rightly did apprehend the infinite vanity of all worldly goods, the meanness of private concerns, the true despicableness of all those honours, those profits, those delights on which commonly men do so dote, we should not be so fond or jealous of them, as to scrape or scuffle for them, envying or grudging them to others; if we did conceive the transcendent worth of future rewards allotted to this and other virtues, the great considerableness of public good at which charity aimeth, the many advantages which may accrue to us from our neighbour's welfare, (entertained with complacence, and wisely accommodated to our use,) we should not be so averse from tendering his good as our own.

2 Let us consider our real state in the world, in dependence upon the pleasure and providence of Almighty God.

If we look upon ourselves as subsisting only by our own care and endeavour, without any other patronage or help, it may thence prove hard to regard the interests of others as comparable to our own; seeing then, in order to our living with any convenience, it is necessary that we should be solicitous for our own preservation and sustenance, that will engage us to contend with others as competitors for the things we need, and incapable

<sup>1</sup> Οἱ μὲν οὖν εἰς ὄνειδος ἄγοντες αὐτὸ, φιλαύτους καλοῦσι τοὺς ἑαυτοῖς ἀπονέμοντας τὸ πλεῖον ἐν χρήμασι, καὶ τιμαῖς, καὶ ἡδοναῖς ταῖς σωματικαῖς· τούτων γὰρ οἱ πολλοὶ ὀρέγονται, καὶ ἐσπουδάκασιν περὶ αὐτὰ, ὡς ἄριστα ὄντα, διὸ καὶ περιμάχητά ἐστιν· οἱ δὲ περὶ ταῦτα πλεονέκται χαρίζονται ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις, καὶ ὅλως τοῖς πάθεσι, καὶ τῇ ἀλόγῳ τῆς ψυχῆς·—δικαίως δὲ τοῖς οὕτω φιλαύτοις ὀνειδίζεται.—Arist. Eth. ix. 8, [4.] Vid. tot.

otherwise to attain: but if (as we ought to do, and SERM.  
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the true state of things requireth) we consider ourselves as subsisting under the protection, and by the providence of God, who no less careth for us than for others, and no less for others than for us; (for, as the Wise Man saith, *He careth for all alike*<sup>s</sup>;) who recommendeth to us a being mutually concerned each for other, and is engaged to keep us from suffering thereby; who commandeth us to disburden our cares upon himself; who assuredly will the better provide for us, as we do more further the good of others: if we do consider thus, it will deliver us from solicitude concerning our subsistence and personal accommodations, whence we may be free to regard the concerns of others, with no less application than we do regard our own.

As living under the same government and laws (being members of one commonwealth, one corporation, one family) disposeth men not only willingly but earnestly to serve the public interest, beyond any hopes of receiving thence any particular advantage answerable to their pain and care; so considering ourselves as members of the world, and of the church, under the governance and patronage of God, may disengage us from immoderate respect of private good, and incline us to promote the common welfare.

3 There is one plain way of rendering this duty possible, or of perfectly reconciling charity to self-love; which is, a making the welfare of our neighbour to be our own: which if we can do, then easily may we desire it more seriously, then may we

<sup>s</sup> Ὁμοίως τε προνοεῖ περὶ πάντων.—Sap. vi. 8. LXX.

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promote it with the greatest zeal and vigour : for then it will be an instance of self-love to exercise charity ; then both these inclinations conspiring will march evenly together, one will not extrude nor depress the other.

It may be hard, while our concerns appear divided, not to prefer our own ; but when they are coincident, or conspire together, the ground of that partiality is removed.

Nor is this an imaginary course, but grounded in reason, and thereby reducible to practice : for considering the manifold bands of relation (natural, civil, or spiritual) between men, as naturally of the same kind and blood, as civilly members of the same society, as spiritually linked in one brotherhood ; considering the mutual advantages derivable from the wealth and welfare of each other, (in way of needful succour, advice, and comfort, of profitable commerce, of pleasant conversation ;) considering the mischiefs which from our neighbour's indigency and affliction we may incur, they rendering him as a wild beast, unsociable, troublesome, and formidable to us ; considering that we cannot be happy without good-nature, and good-humour, and that good-nature cannot behold any sad object without pity and dolorous resentment, good-humour cannot subsist in prospect of such objects ; considering that charity is an instrument, whereby we may apply all our neighbour's good to ourselves, it being ours, if we can find complacence therein ; it may appear reasonable to reckon all our neighbour's concerns to our account.

That this is practicable experience may confirm ;

for we may observe, that men commonly do thus appropriate the concerns of others, resenting the disasters of a friend or of a relation with as sensible displeasure as they could their own; and answerably finding as high a satisfaction in their good fortune. Yea many persons do feel more pain by compassion for others, than they could do in sustaining the same evils; divers can with a stout heart undergo their own afflictions, who are melted with those of a friend or brother. Seeing then, in true judgment, humanity doth match any other relation, and Christianity far doth exceed all other alliances, why may we not on them ground the like affections and practices, if reason hath any force, or consideration can anywise sway in our practice?

4 It will greatly conduce to the perfect observance of this rule, to the depression of self-love, and advancement of charity to the highest pitch, if we do studiously contemplate ourselves, strictly examining our conscience, and seriously reflecting on our unworthiness and vileness; the infirmities and defects of nature, the corruptions and defilements of our soul, the sins and miscarriages of our lives: which doing, we shall certainly be far from admiring or doting on ourselves; but rather, as Job did, we shall condemn and abhor ourselves: when we see ourselves so deformed and ugly, how can we be amiable in our own eyes? how can we more esteem or affect ourselves than others, of whose unworthiness we can hardly be so conscious or sure? What place can there be for that vanity and folly, for that pride and arrogance, for that partiality and injustice, which are the sources of immoderate self-love?

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Job ix. 20;  
xlii. 6.



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5 And lastly, we may from many conspicuous experiments and examples be assured, that such a practice of this duty is not impossible; but these I have already produced and urged in the precedent discourse, and shall not repeat them again.

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## SERMON XXIX.

### THE NATURE, PROPERTIES, AND ACTS OF CHARITY.

EPHES. V. 2.

*And walk in Love.*

ST Paul telleth us, that, *The end of the command-* SERM.  
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*ment* (or the main scope of the evangelical doctrine) 1 Tim. i. 5. *is charity, out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned; that charity is a*  
*general principle of all good practice; (Let all your* 1 Cor. xvi.  
*things be done in charity;)* 14. *that it is the sum and* Gal. v. 14.  
*abridgment of all other duties, so that, He that* Rom. xiii.  
*loveth another, hath fulfilled the whole law; that it* 8, 9.  
*is the chief of the theological virtues; the prime* 1 Cor. xiii.  
*fruit of the divine Spirit, and, The band of perfec-* 13.  
*tion, which combineth and consummateth all other* Gal. v. 22.  
Col. iii. 14. *graces.*

St Peter enjoineth us, that to all other virtues 2 Pet. i. 7.  
we should add charity, as the top and crown of  
them; and, *Above all things, saith he, have fervent* 1 Pet. iv.  
*charity among yourselves.* 8.

St James styleth the law of charity *The royal* James ii.  
*or sovereign law, Νόμον βασιλικόν.* 8.

St John calleth it, in way of excellence, *The* 1 John iii.  
*commandment of God; This is his commandment,* 23; iv. 21.  
*that we should love one another.*

Our Lord claimeth it for his peculiar law; *This* John xv.  
12;

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John xiii.  
34;

xiii. 35.

*is my commandment ; and, A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. And he maketh the observance of it the special badge and cognizance of his followers; By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.*

It being therefore a duty of so grand importance, it is most requisite that we should well understand it, and faithfully observe it ; to which purposes I shall, by God's assistance, endeavour to confer somewhat, first by explaining its nature, then by pressing the observance of it by several inducements.

The nature of it will, as I conceive, be best understood by representing the several chief acts, which it compriseth or implieth as necessary pre-requisites, or essential ingredients, or inseparable adherents to it ; some internally resident in the soul, others discharged in external performance ; together with some special properties of it. And such are those which follow.

I. Loving our neighbour doth imply, that we should value and esteem him : this is necessary, for affection doth follow opinion ; so that we cannot like any thing which we do not esteem, or wherein we do not apprehend some considerable good, attractive of affection ; that is not amiable, which is wholly contemptible ; or so far as it is such.

But in right judgment no man is such ; for the  
Prov. xiv. 21 ;  
xi. 12. Wise Man telleth us, that, *He that despiseth his neighbour, sinneth ; and, He is void of understanding that despiseth his neighbour :* but no man is guilty of sin or folly for despising that which is wholly despicable.

It is indeed true, that every man is subject to defects and to mischances, apt to breed contempt, especially in the minds of vulgar and weak people; but no man is really despicable. For, SERM.  
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Every man living hath stamped on him the venerable image of his glorious Maker, which nothing incident to him can utterly deface.

Every man is of a divine extraction, and allied to Heaven by nature and by grace; as the son of God, and brother of God incarnate. *If I did despise the cause of my man-servant or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?* Job xxxi.  
13, 14, 15;

Every man is endued with that celestial faculty of reason, inspired by the Almighty, (for, *There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding,*) and hath an immortal spirit residing in him; or rather is himself an angelical spirit dwelling in a visible tabernacle. xxxii. 8.

Every man was originally designed and framed for a fruition of eternal happiness.

Every man hath an interest in the common Redemption, purchased by the blood of the Son of God, *Who tasted death for every one.* Heb. ii. 9.

Every man is capable of sovereign bliss, and hath a crown of endless glory offered to him.

In fine, every man, and all men alike, antecedently to their own will and choice, are the objects of his love, of his care, of his mercy; *Who is loving unto every man, and whose mercy* Ps. cxlv.  
9.

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Job xxxiv.

19.

Wisd. vi.

7.

Rom. x.

12; iii. 22.

Job xxxvi.

Ps. lxi.

33.

Rom. xiv.  
10.

James ii.

Ps. cxlvi.

9.

1 Cor. i.  
26.

*is over all his works; Who hath made the small and the great, and careth for all alike; Who is rich, in bounty and mercy, toward all that call upon him.*

How then can any man be deemed contemptible, having so noble relations, capacities, and privileges? How a man standeth in esteem with God Elihu telleth us; *God, saith he, is mighty, and despiseth not any*: although he be so mighty, so excellent in perfection, so infinitely in state exalted above all, yet doth not he slight any; and how can we condemn those, whom the certain voucher and infallible judge of worth deigneth to value? Indeed God so valued every man as to take great care, to be at great cost and trouble, to stoop down from heaven, to assume mortal flesh, to endure pinching wants and sore distresses, to taste death for every one.

We may ask with St Paul, *Why dost thou set at nought thy brother?*

Is it for the lowness of his condition, or for any misfortune that hath befallen him? But are not the best men, art not thou thyself obnoxious to the like? Hath not God declared that he hath a special regard to such? And are not such things commonly disposed by his hand with a gracious intent?

Is it for meanness of parts, or abilities, or endowments? But are not these the gifts of God, absolutely at his disposal, and arbitrarily distributed or preserved; so that thou, who art so wise in thy own conceit to-day, mayest, by a disease, or from a judgment deserved by thy pride, become an idiot to-morrow? Have not many good,

and therefore many happy men, wanted those things? SERM.  
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Is it for moral imperfections or blemishes ; for vicious habits, or actual misdemeanours ? These indeed are the only debasements and disparagements of a man ; yet do they not expunge the characters of divinity impressed on his nature ; and he may by God's mercy recover from them. And are not we ourselves, if grace do not uphold us, liable to the same ? Yea, may we not, if without partiality or flattery we examine ourselves, discern the same within us, or other defects equivalent ? And, however, is not pity rather due to them than contempt ? Whose character was it that, *They trusted they were righteous, and despised others ?* That the most palpable offender should not be quite despised, God had a special care in his Law, for that end moderating punishment, and restraining the number of stripes ; *If, saith the Law, the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed : lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.* Luke xviii.  
9 ; xvi. 15.  
Deut. xxv.  
2, 3.

We may consider, that the common things, both good and bad, wherein men agree, are far more considerable than the peculiar things wherein they differ ; to be a man is much beyond being a lord, or a wit, or a philosopher ; to be a Christian doth infinitely surpass being an emperor, or a learned clerk ; to be a sinner is much worse than to be a beggar, or an idiot. The agreement of

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men is in the substance and body of things ; the difference is in a circumstance, a fringe, or a shadow about them ; so that we cannot despise another man, without reflecting contempt on ourselves, who are so very like him, and not considerably better than he, or hardly can without arrogance pretend to be so.

1 Pet. ii.  
17.

We may therefore, and reason doth require that we should value our neighbour ; and it is no impossible or unreasonable precept which St Peter giveth us, *To honour all men ;* and with it a charitable mind will easily comply : it ever will descry something valuable, something honourable, something amiable in our neighbour ; it will find somewhat of dignity in the meanest, somewhat of worth in the basest, somewhat hopeful in the most degenerate of men ; it therefore will not absolutely slight or scorn any man whatever, looking on him as an abject or forlorn wretch, unworthy of consideration.

1 Cor. xiii.  
7.

Rom. xii.  
10.

Phil. ii. 3.

1 Pet. v.  
5.

It is indeed a point of charity to see more things estimable in others than in ourselves ; or to be apprehensive of more defects meriting disesteem in ourselves than in others ; and consequently in our opinion to prefer others before us, according to those apostolical precepts, *Be kindly affected one toward another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another. In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Be subject one to another.*

II. Loving our neighbour doth imply a sincere and earnest desire of his welfare and good of all kinds, in due proportion : for it is a property of love, that it would have its object most worthy of itself,

and consequently that it should attain the best state whereof it is capable, and persist firm therein ; to be fair and plump, to flourish and thrive without diminution or decay ; this is plain to experience in respect to any other thing (a horse, a flower, a building, or any such thing) which we pretend to love : wherefore charity should dispose us to be thus affected to our neighbour ; so that we do not look upon his condition or affairs with an indifferent eye or cold heart, but are much concerned for him, and put forth hearty wishes for his interests : we should wish him adorned with all virtue, and accomplished with all worthy endowments of soul ; we should wish him prosperous success in all his designs, and a comfortable satisfaction of his desires ; we should wish him with alacrity of mind to reap the fruits of his industry, and to enjoy the best accommodations of his life. Not formally and in compliment, as the mode is, but really and with a cordial sense, upon his undertaking any enterprise, we should wish him good speed ; upon any prosperous success of his endeavours, we should bid him joy ; wherever he is going, whatever he is doing, we should wish him peace and the presence of God with him : we should tender his health, his safety, his quiet, his reputation, his wealth, his prosperity in all respects ; but especially with peculiar ardency we should desire his final welfare, and the happiness of his soul, that being incomparably his chief concern.

Hence readily should we pour forth our prayers, which are the truest expressions of good desire for the welfare of our neighbour, to him who is able to work and bestow it.



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Rom. x. 1. Such was the charity of St Paul for his countrymen, signified in those words, *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved*; such was his love to the Phil. i. 8, Philippians, *God is my record, how greatly I long after you all, in the bowels of Jesus Christ*: 2 Cor. xiii. 9. *and this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment.*

Such was St John's charity to his friend Gaius, 3 John 2. *to whom he said, Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.*

Such is the charity, which we are enjoined to express toward all men, by praying for all men, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 4. *in conformity to the charity of God, Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

Such is the charity we are commanded to use toward our enemies, Matt. v. 44. *Blessing those who curse us, Luke xxiii. 34. and praying for those who despitefully use us and Acts vii. 60. persecute us*; the which was exemplified by our Lord, by St Stephen, by all the holy Apostles. 1 Cor. iv. 12.

III. Charity doth imply a complacence or delightful satisfaction in the good of our neighbour; this is consequent on the former property, for that joy naturally doth result from events agreeable to our desire: charity hath a good eye, which is not offended or dazzled with the lustre of its neighbour's virtue, or with the splendour of his fortune, but vieweth either of them steadily with pleasure, as a very delightful spectacle; it beholdeth him to prosper and flourish, to grow in wealth and repute, not only without envious repining, but with glad-some content: its property is, *To rejoice with them*

Rom. xii. 15.

*that rejoice; to partake of their enjoyments, to feast in their pleasures, to triumph in their success.* SERM.  
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As one member doth feel the health and the delight which another immediately doth enjoy; so hath a charitable man a sensible complacence in the welfare and joy of his neighbour. 1 Cor. xii.  
26.

His prosperity of any kind, in proportion to its importance, doth please him; but especially his spiritual proficiency and improvement in virtue doth yield matter of content; and his good deeds he beholdeth with abundant satisfaction.

This is that instance of charity which St Paul so frequently doth express in his Epistles, declaring the extreme joy he did feel in the faith, in the virtue, in the orderly conversation of those brethren to whom he writeth. 2 Cor. xiii.  
9.  
Phil. ii. 2;  
iv. 1.  
1 Thess.  
iii. 9; ii.  
19.

This charity possessed St John, when he said, *I have no greater joy than to hear, that my children walk in truth.* 3 John 4.

This is the charity of heaven, which doth even cheer the Angels, and doth enhance the bliss of the blessed spirits there; of whom it is said, *There is joy in heaven over every sinner that repenteth.* Luke xv.  
7, 10. Hence this is the disposition of charitable persons, sincerely to congratulate any good occurrence to their neighbour; they are ready to conspire in rendering thanks and praise to the Author of their welfare, taking the good conferred on their neighbour as a blessing and obligation on themselves; so that they, upon such occasions, are apt to say with St Paul, *What thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before God?* and, *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, because that your faith groweth ex-* 1 Thess.  
iii. 9.  
2 Thess. i.  
3.

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1 Cor. i. 4.

5.

Phil. i. 3.

Rom. i. 8.

Eph. i. 16.

Col. i. 3.

1 Thess. i.

2.

Eph. v.

20.

1 Tim. ii.

1.

*ceedingly, and that the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth: and, I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in every thing ye are enriched by him.*

It is a precept of St Paul, *Give thanks always* *ὑπὲρ πάντων*; which is translated *For all things*, but it might as well be rendered *For all persons*, according to that injunction, *I exhort, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men*: not only prayers are to be made, but thanksgivings are to be offered for all men, out of general charity.

IV. Correspondently, love of our neighbour doth imply condolency and commiseration of the evils befalling him: for what we love, we cannot, without displeasure, behold lying in a bad condition, sinking into decay, or in danger to perish; so, to a charitable mind, the bad state of any man is a most unpleasant and painful sight.

Rom. xii.  
15.

It is the property of charity, *To mourn with those that mourn*; not coldly, but passionately, (for it is, *To weep with those that weep*,) resenting every man's case with an affection suitable thereto, and as he doth himself resent it.

Is any man fallen into disgrace? charity doth hold down its head, is abashed and out of countenance, partaking of his shame: is any man disappointed of his hopes or endeavours? charity crieth out alas, as if it were itself defeated: is any man afflicted with pain or sickness? charity looketh sadly, it sigheth and groaneth, it fainteth and languisheth with him: is any man pinched with hard want? charity if it cannot succour, it will con-

dole: doth ill news arrive? charity doth hear it with an unwilling ear and a sad heart, although not particularly concerned in it. The sight of a wreck at sea, of a field spread with carcasses of a country desolated, of houses burnt and cities ruined, and of the like calamities incident to mankind, would touch the bowels of any man; but the very report of them would affect the heart of charity. It doth not suffer a man with comfort or ease to enjoy the accommodations of his own state, while others before him are in distress: it cannot be merry while any man in presence is sorrowful: it cannot seem happy while its neighbour doth appear miserable: it hath a share in all the afflictions which it doth behold or hear of, according to that instance in St Paul of the Philippians, *Ye have done well, that ye did communicate with (or partake in) my afflictions*; and according to that precept, *Remember those which are in bonds, as bound with them*. SERM.  
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Such was the charity of Job; *Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?* Phil. iv.  
14.  
Heb. xiii.  
3.

Such was the charity of the Psalmist, even toward his ungrateful enemies; *They, saith he, rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul; but as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth, I humbled my soul with fasting. I behaved myself as though it had been my friend or my brother; I bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother*. Job xxx.  
25.  
Ps. xxxv.  
12, 13, 14.

Such was the charity of St. Paul; *Who is weak, said he, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?* with fervent compassion. 2 Cor xi.  
29.

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Such was the charity of our Saviour; which so reigned in his heart, that no passion is so often attributed to him as this of pity; it being expressed to be the motive of his great works. *Jesus, saith St Matthew, went forth, and saw a great multitude, καὶ ἐσπλαγχνίσθη ἐπ' αὐτοῖς, and was moved (in his bowels) with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick: and, I have compassion on the multitude, because they have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way: and, Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and, Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand and touched him, (the leper,) and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean: and, When the Lord saw her, (the widow of Nain, whose son was carried out,) he had compassion on her: and, He beheld the city, and wept over it, considering the miseries impendent on it, as a just punishment of their outrageous injuries against himself; and when the two good sisters did bewail their brother Lazarus, He groaned in spirit, and was troubled; and wept with them: whence the Jews did collect, Behold how he loved him!*

Matt. xiv.  
14;

xv. 32;

xx. 34.

Mark i. 41.

Luke vii.  
13;

xix. 41.

John xi.  
33, 35, 36.

Thus any calamity or misfortune befalling his neighbour doth raise distasteful regret and commiseration in a charitable soul; but especially moral evils (which indeed are the great evils, in comparison whereto nothing else is evil) do work that effect: to see men dishonour and wrong their Maker, to provoke his anger, and incur his disfavour; to see men abuse their reason, and disgrace their nature; to see men endamage their spiritual estate, to endanger the loss of their souls, to discoat from their happiness and run into eternal ruin, by

distemper of mind and an inordinate conversation; SERM. XXIX.  
 this is most afflictive to a man endued with any  
 good degree of charity. Could one see a man  
 sprawling on the ground, weltering in his blood,  
 with gaping wounds, gasping for breath, without  
 compassion? And seeing the condition of him  
 that lieth grovelling in sin, weltering in guilt,  
 wounded with bitter remorse and pangs of con-  
 science, nearly obnoxious to eternal death, is far  
 worse and more deplorable; how can it but touch  
 the heart of a charitable man, and stir his bowels  
 with compassionate anguish?

Such was the excellent charity of the holy  
 Psalmist, signified in those ejaculations, *I beheld* Ps. cxix. 158;  
*the transgressors, and was grieved; because they*  
*kept not thy word:* and, *Rivers of waters run down* cxix. 136.  
*mine eyes, because men keep not thy law.*

Such was the charity of St Paul toward his in-  
 credulous and obdurate countrymen, (notwithstand-  
 ing their hatred and ill treatment of himself,) the  
 which he so earnestly did aver in those words, *I* Rom. ix. 1, 2.  
*say the truth, I lie not, my conscience also bearing*  
*me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great*  
*heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart for*  
*them.*

Such was the charity of our Lord, which dis-  
 posed him as to a continual sense of men's evils, so  
 upon particular occasions to grieve at their sins and  
 spiritual wants; as when the Pharisees maligned  
 him for his doing good, *He, it is said, did grieve* Mark iii. 5.  
*(or condole) for the hardness of their heart; and,*  
*When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with* Matt. ix. 36.  
*compassion on them, because they fainted, and were*  
*scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd:*

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Luke xix.  
41, 42.

and when he wept over Jerusalem, because, *It did not know in its day the things which belonged to its peace*, (either temporal, or eternal).

This is that charity, which God himself in a wonderful and incomprehensible manner doth exemplify to us: for he is, *The father of pities; Full of bowels*, Πολύσπλαγχνος; *His bowels are troubled*, and *do sound*, when he is (for upholding justice, or reclaiming sinners) constrained to inflict punishment; of him it is said, that, *His soul was grieved<sup>a</sup> for the misery of Israel*; and that, *He was afflicted in all the afflictions of his people*. So incredible miracles doth infinite charity work in God, that the impassible God in a manner should suffer with us, that happiness itself should partake in our misery; that grief should spring up in the fountain of joy. How this can be, we thoroughly cannot well apprehend; but surely those expresses are used in condescension to signify the greatly charitable benignity of God, and to shew us our duty, that, *We should be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful*, sympathizing with the miseries and sorrows of our brethren.

Luke vi.  
36.  
Eph. v. 1.  
Luke xvi.  
20.

Col. iii. 12.  
Phil. ii. 1.  
Eph. iv.

32.  
1 Pet. iii.  
8.

This is that duty which is so frequently inculcated; when we are charged, *To put on bowels of pity, To be tenderhearted*, Εὐσπλαγχνοί, *To be compassionate*, Συμπαθεῖς, one toward another.

Hence it is, that good men in this world cannot live in any briskness of mirth or height of jollity, their own enjoyments being tempered by the discontents of others; the continual obvious spectacles of sorrow and of sin damping their pleasures, and quashing excessive transports of joy: for

<sup>a</sup> Ὀλιγόθυ.—Jud. x. 16. LXX.

who could much enjoy himself in an hospital, in a prison, in a charnel? SERM.  
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V. It is generally a property of love to appropriate its object; in apprehension and affection embracing it, possessing it, enjoying it as its own: so charity doth make our neighbour to be ours, engaging us to tender his case and his concerns as our own; so that we shall exercise about them the same affections of soul, (the same desires, the same hopes and fears, the same joys and sorrows,) as about our own nearest and most peculiar interest; so that his danger will affright us, and in his security we shall find repose; his profit is gain, and his losses are damages to us; we do rise by his preferment, and sink down by his fall; his good speed is a satisfaction, and his disappointment a cross to us; his enjoyments afford pleasure, and his sufferings bring pain to us.

So charity doth enlarge our minds beyond private considerations, conferring on them an universal interest, and reducing all the world within the verge of their affectionate care; so that a man's self is a very small and inconsiderable portion of his regard: whence charity is said not to seek its own things, and we are commanded not to look on our own things; for that the regard which charity beareth to its own interest, in comparison to that which it beareth toward the concerns of others, hath the same proportion as one man hath to all men; being therefore exceedingly small, and as it were none at all.

*This, saith St Chrysostom, is the canon of most perfect Christianity, this is an exact boundary, this is the highest top of it, to seek things profitable to*

1 Cor. xiii.  
5; x. 24.  
Phil. ii. 4.



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Phil. iii.  
16.

1 Cor. x.  
33.

*the public<sup>b</sup>*: and according to this rule charity doth walk, it prescribeth that compass to itself, it aspi-  
reth to that pitch; it disposeth to act as St Paul  
did, *I please all men in all things, not seeking mine  
own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be  
saved.*

VI. It is a property of love to affect union, or  
the greatest approximation that can be to its object.  
As hatred doth set things at distance, making  
them to shun or chase away one another; so love  
doth attract things, doth combine them, doth hold  
them fast together; every one would be embracing  
and enjoying what he loveth in the manner where-  
of it is capable: so doth charity dispose a man to  
conjunction with others; it soon will breed acquaint-  
ance, kind conversation, and amicable correspond-  
ence with our neighbour.

It would be a stranger to no man, to whom, by  
its intercourse, it may yield any benefit or com-  
fort.

Its arms are always open, and its bosom free  
to receive all, who do not reject or decline its  
amity.

It is most frankly accessible, most affable, most  
tractable, most sociable, most apt to interchange  
good offices; most ready to oblige others, and  
willing to be obliged by them.

It avoideth that unreasonable suspiciousness  
and diffidence, that timorous shyness, that crafty  
reservedness, that supercilious morosity, that fasti-  
dious sullenness, and the like untoward dispositions,

<sup>b</sup> Τοῦτο κανὼν Χριστιανισμοῦ τοῦ πλειοτάτου, τοῦτο ὅρος ἡκριβωμένος, αὕτη ἡ κορυφή ἡ ἀνωτάτω, τὸ τὰ κοινῇ συμφέροντα ζητεῖν.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Orat. xxv. [Opp. Tom. iii. p. 404.]

which keep men in estrangement, stifling good inclinations to familiarity and friendship.

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VII. It is a property of love to desire a reciprocal affection<sup>c</sup>; for that is the surest possession and firmest union, which is grounded upon voluntarily conspiring in affection; and if we do value any person, we cannot but prize his good-will and esteem.

Charity is the mother of friendship, not only as inclining us to love others, but as attracting others to love us; disposing us to affect their amity, and by obliging means to procure it.

Hence is that evangelical precept so often enjoined to us, of pursuing peace with all men, importing that we should desire and seek, by all fair means, the good-will of men, without which peace from them cannot subsist; for if they do not love us, they will be infesting us with unkind words or deeds.

Heb. xii.  
14.  
2 Tim. ii.  
22.  
Rom. xii.  
18.

VIII. Hence also charity disposeth to please our neighbour, not only by inoffensive but by obliging demeanour; by a ready complaisance and compliance with his fashion, with his humour, with his desire in matters lawful, or in a way consistent with duty and discretion.

Such charity St Paul did prescribe; *Let every one please his neighbour for his good to edification:* such he practised himself, *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit; and, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might gain the more.*

Rom. xv.  
2.  
1 Cor. x.  
33;  
ix. 19.

Such was the charity of our Lord, *For even Christ pleased not himself:* he indeed did stoop to

Rom. xv.  
3.

<sup>c</sup> Spes mutue caritatis.—Sen. Ep. ix. [9].

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John ii. 2.

Matt. xi.

19.

Luke vii.

34.

converse with sorry men in their way, he came when he was invited, he accepted their entertainment, he from the frankness of his conversation with all sorts of persons did undergo the reproach of being a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.

It is the genius and complexion of charity to affect nothing uncouth or singular in matters of indifferent nature; to be candid, not rigid in opinion; to be pliable, not stiff in humour; to be smooth and gentle, not rugged and peevish in behaviour.

It doth indeed not flatter, not soothe, not humour any man in bad things, or in things very absurd and foolish; it would rather choose to displease and cross him, than to abuse, to delude, to wrong, or hurt him; but excepting such cases, it gladly pleaseth all men, denying its own will and conceit to satisfy the pleasure and fancy of others; practising that which St Peter enjoined in that precept, *Be of one mind, be compassionate, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous*<sup>d</sup>; or as St Paul might intend, when he bid us, *To gratify, to indulge one another*, χαρίζεσθαι ἑαυτοῖς.

1 Pet. iii.  
8.

Eph. iv.

32.

Col. iii. 13.

IX. Love of our neighbour doth imply readiness upon all occasions to do him good, to promote and advance his benefit in all kinds.

It doth not rest in good opinions of mind, and good affections of heart, but from those roots doth put forth abundant fruits of real beneficence; it will not be satisfied with faint desires or sluggish wishes, but will be up and doing what it can for its neighbour.

<sup>d</sup> Ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, εὐσπλαγχοι, φιλόφρονες.—  
1 Pet. iii. 8.

Love is a busy and active, a vigorous and sprightly, a courageous and industrious disposition of soul; which will prompt a man, and push him forward to undertake or undergo anything, to endure pains, to encounter dangers, to surmount difficulties for the good of its object<sup>e</sup>. SERM.  
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Such is true charity; it will dispose us *To love*, 1 John iii.  
18. as St John prescribeth, *ἐργῶ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ*, *in work and in truth*: not only in mental desire, but in James ii.  
16. effectual performance; not only in verbal pretence, but in real effect.

Hence charity will render a man a general benefactor, in all matters, upon all occasions; affording to his neighbour all kinds of assistance and relief, according to his neighbour's need, and his own ability<sup>f</sup>: it will make him a bountiful dispenser of his goods to the poor, a comforter of the afflicted, a visitor of the sick, an instructor of the ignorant, an adviser of the doubtful, a protector of the oppressed, a hospitable entertainer of strangers, a Job xxix.  
17; xxxi.  
32. reconciler of differences, an intercessor for offenders, an advocate of those who need defence, a succourer of all that want help.

The practice of Job describeth its nature; *I*, xxix. 12,  
13, 15—17; saith he, *delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame: I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not I searched out: and I brake the jaws of the*

<sup>e</sup> Love is strong as death.—Cant. viii. 6.

<sup>f</sup> Ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῶν ἀσθενούντων.—Acts xx. 35. Παραμυθεῖσθε τοὺς ὀλιγοψύχους, ἀντέχεσθε τῶν ἀσθενῶν.—1 Thess. v. 14.

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Job xxxi.  
16, 17, 19;

xxx. 32.

wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth. If I have held the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering. The stranger did not lodge in the street; but I opened my doors to the traveller.

Such is a charitable man; the sun is not more liberal of his light and warmth, than he is of beneficial influence.

1 Tim. vi.  
18.

He doth not spare his substance, being *Rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate*: and where his estate faileth, yet the contribution of his endeavour will not be wanting; he will be ready to draw and press others to beneficence; so doing good, not only according to his power, but in a manner beyond it, making the ability of others to supply his own weakness, and being liberal with their wealth. The description of Cimon is a good character of a charitable man, *Nulli fides ejus, nulli opera, nulli res familiaris defuit*<sup>s</sup>.

2 Cor. vi.  
10.

1 Cor. iv.  
11.

Matt. viii.  
20.

2 Cor. viii.  
9.

Thus may the poorest men be great benefactors: so the poor Apostles, who had nothing, yet did enrich many; not only in spiritual treasure, but taking care for supply of the poor, by their precepts and moving exhortations: and *He that had not where to lay his head*, was the most bountiful person that ever was; *For our sake he became poor, that we by his poverty might be made rich*.

In all kinds charity disposeth to further our neighbour's good, but especially in the concerns of his soul; the which as incomparably they do surpass

<sup>s</sup> Corn. Nep. in Cimone. [cap. iv.]

all others, so it is the truest and noblest charity to promote them. SERM.  
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It will incline us, *To draw forth our soul to the hungry, and to satisfy the afflicted soul; to bring the poor that are cast out to our house; to cover the naked, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke; to supply any corporal indigency, to relieve any temporal distress: but especially it will induce to make provision for the soul, to relieve the spiritual needs of our neighbour; by affording him good instruction, and taking care that he be informed in his duty, or conducted in his way to happiness; by admonition and exhortation quickening, encouraging, provoking, spurring him to good works; by resolving him in his doubts, and comforting him in his troubles of conscience; (*Lifting up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;*) by seasonable and prudent reproof: by all ways serving to convert him from the error of his way; and so saving a soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins; which is the proper work of charity; for *Charity*, saith St Peter, *covereth a multitude of sins.**

This was the charity of our Saviour: *He went about doing good, healing the bodily infirmities, (every sickness and every disease among the people,) satisfying their bodily necessities, comforting them in their worldly distresses, so far as to perform great miracles for those purposes; (curing inveterate maladies, restoring limbs and senses, raising the dead, multiplying loaves and fishes:)* but his charity was chiefly exercised in spiritual beneficence; in purveying sustenance and comfort for their souls,

Isai. lviii.  
6, 7, 10.  
Ezek. xviii.  
16.

Heb. x.  
24.

Heb. xii.  
12.

1 Thess. v.  
14.  
James v.  
20.

1 Pet. iv.  
8.  
Prov. x.  
12.

Acts x.  
38.  
Matt. iv.  
23; ix. 35.

John xiv.  
1; xv. 11;  
xvi. 33.

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**10.**

in feeding their minds by wholesome instruction, in curing their spiritual distempers, in correcting their ignorances and errors, in exciting them to duty by powerful advices and exhortations, in supporting them by heavenly consolations against temptations and troubles.

**Acts iii. 6 ;**  
**v. 15, 16 ;**  
**viii. 7 ;**  
**xxviii. 8,**  
**9 ; xx. 35.**  
**Rom. xv.**  
**26.**  
**1 Cor. xvi.**  
**1.**  
**Gal. ii. 10.**  
**2 Cor. viii.**  
**7 ; ix. 1.**  
**1 Tim. vi.**  
**18.**  
**Heb. xiii.**  
**16.**  
**2 Tim. ii.**  
**10.**

Thus also did the charity of the holy Apostles principally exert itself: they did not neglect affording relief to the outward needs of men; they did take care, by earnest intercession and exhortation, for support of the poor; but, especially, they did labour to promote the spiritual benefit of men: for this they did undertake so many cares, and toils, and travels; for this they did undergo so many hardships, so many hazards, so many difficulties and troubles; *Therefore, said St Paul, I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*

X. This indeed is a property of charity, to make a man deny himself, to neglect his own interest, yea to despise all selfish regards for the benefit of his neighbour: to him that is inspired with charity, his own good is not good, when it standeth in competition with the more considerable good of another; nothing is so dear to him, which he gladly will not part with upon such considerations.

**1 Cor. ix.**  
**19.**

Liberty is a precious thing, which every man gladly would enjoy: yet how little did St Paul's charity regard it! how absolutely did he abandon it for his neighbour's good! *Though, said he, I am free from all men, yet I have made myself servant (or have enslaved myself<sup>h</sup>) unto all, that I might*

<sup>h</sup> Πᾶσιν ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα.

gain the more: and he did express much satisfaction in the bonds which he bare for the good of his brethren. *I Paul, saith he, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles;—I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even unto bonds;—endure all things for the elect's sakes.*

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Phil. i. 12,  
14.  
Eph. iii. 1.  
2 Tim. ii.  
9, 10.

Every man loveth his own humour, and would please himself: but the charity of St Paul did rather choose to please all men; making him all things to all men, that by all means he might save some: and the rule he commended to others, and imposed on himself, was this; *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

1 Cor. x.  
33; ix. 22.

Rom. xv.  
1.

Profit is the common mark of men's designs and endeavours; but charity often doth not aim thereat, but waveth it for its neighbour's advantage: for, *Aim not every man at his own things, but every man also at the things of others,* is St Paul's rule; and, *Not to seek his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved,* was his practice.

Phil. ii. 4.

1 Cor. x.  
24, 33.

To suffer is grievous to human nature, and every man would shun it; but charity not only doth support it, but joyeth in it, when it conduceth to its neighbour's advantage; *I rejoyce, said that charitable apostle, in my sufferings for you.*

Col. i. 24.  
2 Cor. i. 4,  
6; vii. 4.

Ease is a thing generally desirable and acceptable; but charity doth part with it, embracing labour, watchings, travails, and troubles for its neighbour's good: upon this account did the holy Apostles undertake abundant labours, as St Paul telleth us; and *To this end, saith he, do I labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily: to what end? That we may present*

1 Thess. ii.  
9.  
2 Thess.  
iii. 8.  
2 Cor. xi.  
23; vi. 5.  
Col. i. 29.



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Heb. vi.

10.

1 Thess. i.

3.

John xv.

13.

1 John iii.

16.

John xv.

12.

Eph. v. 2.

2 Cor. xii.

15.

Phil. ii.

17.

1 Thess. ii.

8.

*every man perfect in Christ Jesus: this is that Labour of love, which they did commend in others, and so notably themselves exercise.*

Life of all things is held most precious and dear; yet this charity, upon urgent occasions, will expose, will sacrifice for its neighbour's good: *This, our Lord telleth us, is the greatest love that any man can express to his friend; and the highest instance that ever was of charity was herein shewed; the imitation whereof St John doth not doubt to recommend to us: In this, saith he, have we known the love of God, because he hath laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our life for the brethren: and St Paul, Walk in love, even as Christ loved us, and gave himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God: the which precept he backed with his own example; I, saith he, very gladly will spend and be spent for your souls; and, If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all; and, Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.*

Reputation to some is more dear than life, and it is worse than death to be held a malefactor, to be loaded with odious reproaches, to have an infamous character; yet charity will engage men hereto, willingly to sustain the most grievous obloquy and disgrace: for this the same heroical Apostles did pass through *Honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report, as deceivers, and yet true:—for this, They were made a spectacle to the world, as fools, as weak, as despicable;—were reviled, defamed, made as the filth of the*

2 Cor. vi.  
8.1 Cor. iv. 9,  
10, 13.

world, and offscouring of all things. For this St Paul was content to suffer *ὡς κακοῦργος*, *As a malefactor*. So there was nothing which charity will not deny itself and lose for the good of its neighbour. SERM. XXIX.  
2 Tim. ii. 9.

XI. It is a property of love not to stand upon distinctions and nice respects; but to be condescending, and willing to perform the meanest offices, needful or useful for the good of its friend.

He that truly loveth is a voluntary servant, and gladly will stoop to any employment, for which the need or considerable benefit of him whom he loveth doth call.

So the greatest souls, and the most glorious beings, the which are most endued with charity, by it are disposed with greatest readiness to serve their inferiors.

This made St Paul constitute himself a servant (we might render it a slave) of all men, absolutely devoted to the promoting their interests with his utmost labour and diligence; undertaking toilsome drudgeries, running about upon errands for them. 1 Cor. ix. 19.

This maketh the blessed and glorious Angels (the Principalities and Powers above) vouchsafe to wait on men, to be the guards of all good men, to be *Ministering spirits, sent out to minister for them who shall inherit salvation*: not only obedience to God enforceth them, but charity disposeth them gladly to serve us, who are so much their inferiors; the same charity, which produceth joy in them at the conversion of a sinner. Ps. xci. 11; xxxiv. 7.  
Heb. i. 7, 14.  
Luke xv. 7, 10.

This made the Son of God to descend from heaven, and lay aside that glory which he had with God before the world was; this made him, who was John xvii. 5.

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2 Cor. viii.

9.  
Luke xxii.

27.  
Matt. xx.

28.  
John xiii.  
14, 15.

so rich, to become poor, that we by his poverty might be enriched; this made him converse and demean himself among his servants, as he that ministered; this made him to wash his disciples' feet, thereby designing instructively to exemplify the duty and nature of charity; for *If*, said he, *I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, then ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*

Isai. lvii.  
15.

This maketh God himself (*The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity*) to condescend so far, as to be continually employed in carefully watching over, in providing for, in protecting and assisting us vile and wretched worms; for though, *He dwelleth on high, yet humbleth he himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth.* This maketh him with so much pain and patience to support our infirmities, to bear with our offences, to wait for our conversion; according to that protestation in the Prophet, *Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.*

Ps. cxiii.  
6; viii. 4;  
cxliv. 3.  
Job vii.  
17.

Isai. xliii.  
24.

In conformity to this wonderful practice, whose actions are the best rules and passions of our deportment, charity should dispose us, according to St Paul's practice, *By love to serve one another.*

Gal. v. 13.

Indeed it will not suffer any man to look down on another with supercilious contempt or neglect, as if he were unworthy or beneath our regard. It will incline superiors to look on their inferiors, (their subjects, their servants, their meanest and poorest neighbours,) not as beasts or as slaves, but as men, as brethren; as descending from the same stock, as partakers of the common nature and rea-

Job xxxi.  
13, 14, 15.

son; as those, *Who have obtained the like precious faith*; as heirs of the same precious promises and glorious hopes; as their equals in the best things, and in all considerable advantages; equals in God's sight, and according to our Lord's intent, when he said, *One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren*; according to St Paul's exhortation to Philemon, that he would receive Onesimus, *Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved in the Lord.*

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2 Pet. i. 1.

Eph. vi. 9.  
Col. iv. 1.  
Matt. xxiii.  
8.

Philem. 16.

Accordingly, charity will dispose men of rank in their behaviour to be condescensive, lowly, meek, courteous, obliging and helpful to those, who, in human eye or in worldly state, are most below them; remembering that ordinance of our Lord, charged on all his disciples, and enforced by his own pattern, *He that is greatest among you let him be your servant.*

Matt.  
xxiii. 11.  
Luke xxii.  
27.

Love indeed is the great leveller, which in a manner setteth all things on even ground, and reduceth to a just poise<sup>1</sup>; which bringeth down heaven to earth, and raiseth up earth to heaven; which inclineth the highest to wait upon the lowest; which engageth the strength of the mightiest to help the weakest, and the wealth of the richest to supply the poorest, *That there may be an equality, ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης*; that no where there may be an useless abundance, or a helpless indigence.

2 Cor. viii.  
14.

XII. Charity doth regulate our dealing, our deportment, our conversation toward our neighbour, implying good usage and fair treatment of him on all occasions; for no man doth handle

<sup>1</sup> Amicitia pares invenit, aut facit.

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 offence thereof.

Wherefore the language of charity is soft and  
 sweet, not wounding the heart, nor grating on  
 the ear of any with whom a man converseth ;  
 like the language of which the Wise Man saith,  
 Prov. xv. *The words of the pure are pleasant words ;—*  
 26 ; xvi. such as are *Sweet to the soul, and health to the*  
 24. *bones :* and, *The words of a wise man's mouth are*  
 Eccles. x. *gracious ;* such as our Lord's were, *Words of grace,*  
 12. Luke iv. *λόγοι τῆς χάριτος ;* such as the Apostle speaketh of,  
 22. Col. iv. 6. *Let your speech be always with grace, ἐν χάριτι—*  
 Eph. iv. such as may give grace to the hearers ; being enter-  
 29. tained, not with aversation, but with favourable  
 acceptance.

Its carriage is gentle, courteous, benign ; bearing  
 in it marks of affection and kind respect.

Its dealing is equal, moderate, fair, yielding  
 no occasion of disgust or complaint ; not catching  
 at, or taking advantages, not meting hard mea-  
 sure.

It doth not foster any bad passion or humour,  
 which may embitter or sour conversation, so that it  
 rendereth a man continually good company.

If a man be harsh or surly in his discourse,  
 rugged or rude in his demeanour, hard and rigorous  
 in his dealing, it is a certain argument of his defect  
 in charity : for it calmeth and sweeteneth the mind ;  
 it quasheth keen, fierce, and boisterous passions ; it  
 discardeth those conceits, and those humours, from  
 whence such practice doth issue.

1 Cor. xiii.  
 5.

*Charity, saith St Paul, behaveth not itself un-*  
*handsomely, οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ ;* is not untoward, un-

seemly, uncivil, or clownish in word, or in carriage, or in deed : it is in truth the most civilizing and most polishing disposition that can be ; nothing doth render a man so completely genteel ; not in an affected or artificial way, (consisting in certain postures or motions of body ; dopping, cringing, &c., in forms of expression, or modish addresses, which men learn like parrots, and vent by rote, usually not meaning any thing by them, often with them disguising fraud and rancour,) but in a real and natural manner, suggested by good judgment and hearty affection.

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A charitable man may perhaps not be guilty of courtship ; or may be unpractised in the modes of address ; but he will not be deficient in the substance of paying every man proper and due respect ; this indeed is true courtesy, grounded on reason, and proceeding from the heart ; which therefore is far more genuine, more solid, more steady, than that which is built on fashion and issueth from affectation ; the which indeed only doth ape or counterfeit the deportment of charity : for what a charitable man truly is, that a gallant would seem to be.

Such are the properties of charity.

There be also further many particular acts, which have a very close alliance to it, (being ever coherent with it, or springing from it,) which are recommended to us by precepts in the holy scripture ; the which it will be convenient to mention.

1 It is a proper act of charity to forbear anger upon provocation, or to repress its motions ; to resent injuries and discourtesies either not at all, or very calmly and mildly ; for,

*Charity is not easily provoked, οὐ παροξύνεται.*

1 Cor. xiii.  
5.

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XXIX.1 Cor. xiii.  
4, 7.*Charity suffereth long, and is kind, μακροθυμεῖ.**Charity doth endure all things, πάντα ὑπομένει.*

Anger is a violent insurrection of the mind against a person, but love is not apt to rise up in opposition against any; anger is an intemperate heat, love hath a pure warmth quite of another nature; as natural heat is from a fever; or as the heat of the sun from that of a culinary fire, which putteth that out, as the sun-beams do extinguish a culinary fire: anger hath *An appetite of revenge, ὀρεξις ἀμύνης*, or doing mischief to the object of it; but love is innocent, and worketh no evil.

Rom. xiii.  
10.

Love disposeth, if our neighbour doth misbehave himself toward us, (by wrongful usage, or unkind carriage,) to be sorry for him, and to pity him; which are passions contrary to anger, and slaking the violences of it.

Cant. viii.  
7.

It is said in the Canticles, *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: charity would hold out against many neglects, many provocations.*

Eph. iv. 1,  
2;

iv. 31.

Hence the precepts; *Walk with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love: Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice: Put off anger, wrath, malice, &c. Be slow to wrath.*

Col. iii. 8.

James i.  
19.

2 It is a proper act of charity to remit offences, suppressing all designs of revenge, and not retaining any grudge: for,

1 Cor. xiii.

7.

Prov. x.

12.

1 Pet. iv. 8.

James v.

20.

*Charity doth cover all things, πάντα στέγει; and in this sense doth hide a multitude of sins: all dispositions, all intents to do harm are inconsistent with it, are quite repugnant to it.*

Hence those precepts; *Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye: Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another; even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you: See that none render evil for evil, but ever follow that which is good both among yourselves and to all men:* and many the like precepts occur in the gospels, the apostolical writings; yea even in the Old Testament, wherein charity did not run in so high a strain.

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XXIX.Col. iii.  
12, 13.Eph. iv.  
32.

1 Thess. v.

15.  
1 Pet. iii.9.  
Rom. xii.17.  
Matt. vi.14; v. 44-  
Prov. xx.22; xxv.  
21.

3 It is a duty coherent with charity, to maintain concord and peace; to abstain from contention and strife, together with the sources of them, pride, envy, emulation, malice.

We are commanded, *To be of one soul, of one mind*, (like the multitude of believers in the Acts, who had one heart and one soul;) *That we should keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; that we should be of one accord, of one mind, standing fast in one Spirit, with one mind; That we should all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among us, but that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment; that there be no factions, or schisms in the body; that all dissensions, all clamours, all murmurings, all emulations should be abandoned and put away from us; that we should pursue and maintain peace with all men: obedience to which commands can only be the result of charity, esteeming the person and judgment of our neighbour;*

Phil. ii. 2.

1 Pet. iii.  
8.Acts iv.  
32.Eph. iv. 3.  
2 Cor. xiii.11.  
Phil. i. 27.

1 Cor. i.

10.  
Rom. xv.5, 6; xii.  
16.Phil. iii.  
16.1 Cor. xii.  
25; xi. 18;i. 11; iii. 3.  
2 Cor. xii.

20.

Phil. ii. 14.  
Heb. xii.14.  
Rom. xii.18.  
2 Tim. ii.

22.



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James iv.  
1.  
Gal. v. 20.

desiring his good-will, tendering his good ; curbing those fleshly lusts, and those fierce passions, from the predominancy whereof discords and strifes do spring.

4 Another charitable practice is, being candid in opinion, and mild in censure, about our neighbour and his actions ; having a good conceit of his person, and representing him to ourselves under the best character we can ; making the most favourable construction of his words, and the fairest interpretation of his designs.

Charity disposeth us to entertain a good opinion of our neighbour ; for desiring his good we shall be concerned for him, and prejudiced, as it were, on his side ; being unwilling to discover any blemish in him to our own disappointment and regret.

Love cannot subsist without esteem ; and it would not willingly, by destroying that, lose its own subsistence.

Love would preserve any good of its friend, and therefore his reputation ; which is a good in itself precious, and ever very dear to him.

Love would bestow any good, and therefore its esteem ; which is a considerable good.

Harsh censure is a very rude kind of treatment, grievously vexing a man, and really hurting him ; charity therefore will not be guilty of it.

It disposeth rather to oversee and connive at faults, than to find them, or to pore on them ; rather to hide and smother, than to disclose or divulge them ; rather to extenuate and excuse, than to exaggerate or aggravate them.

Are words capable of a good sense ? charity will expound them thereto : may an action be

imputed to any good intent? charity will ever refer it thither: doth a fault admit any plea, apology, or diminution? charity will be sure to allege it: may a quality admit a good name? charity will call it thereby. SERM.  
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*It doth not impute evil, οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν,* 1 Cor. xiii.  
or put it to any man's account, beyond absolute<sup>5</sup> necessity.

*It hopeth all things, πάντα ἐλπίζει, and believeth* xiii. 7.  
*all things, πάντα πιστεύει;* hopeth and believeth all things for the best, in favour to its neighbour, concerning his intentions and actions liable to doubt.

It banisheth all evil surmises; it rejecteth all ill 1 Tim. vi.  
stories, malicious insinuations, perverse glosses and<sup>4</sup> descants.

5 Another charitable practice is, to comport 1 Thess. v.  
with the infirmities of our neighbour; according to 14.  
Acts xx.  
that rule of St Paul, *We that are strong ought to* 35.  
Rom. xv. 1.  
*bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves;* and that precept, *Bear ye one another's* Gal. vi. 2.  
*burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

Is a man wiser than his neighbour, or in any case freer of defects? charity will dispose to use that advantage so as not to condemn him, or insult over him; but to instruct him, to help him, to comfort him.

As we deal with children, allowing to the infirmities of their age, bearing their ignorance, frowardness, untoward humours, without distasting them; so should we with our brethren who labour under any weakness of mind or humour.

6 It is an act of charity to abstain from offending, or scandalizing our brethren; by doing

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any thing, which either may occasion him to commit sin, or disaffect him to religion, or discourage him in the practice of duty, (that which St Paul calleth to defile and smite his weak conscience<sup>k</sup>,) or which anywise may discompose, vex, and grieve him : for, *If thy brother be grieved with thy meat,*  
 Rom. xiv. 15. *now walkest thou not charitably, οὐκ ἔτι κατὰ ἀγάπην*  
 1 Cor. viii. 13; x. 31, *περιπατεῖς.*

32.  
 Rom. xiv.  
 21.

<sup>k</sup> Ἡ συνείδησις αὐτῶν ἀσθενὴς οὕσα μολύνεται.—1 Cor. viii. 7.  
 Τύπτοντες αὐτῶν τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενοῦσαν.—1 Cor. viii. 12.

## SERMON XXX.

### MOTIVES AND ARGUMENTS TO CHARITY.

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HEB. X. 24.

*Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.*

THAT which is here recommended by the Apostle, SERM.  
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as the common duty of Christians toward each other, upon emergent occasions, with zeal and care to provoke one another to the practice of charity and beneficence, may well be conceived the special duty of those, whose office it is to instruct and guide others, when opportunity is afforded: with that obligation I shall now comply, by representing divers considerations serving to excite and encourage us to that practice; this (without premising any description or explication of the duty; the nature, special acts, and properties whereof I have already declared) I shall immediately undertake.

I. First then, I desire you to remember and consider, that you are men, and as such obliged to this duty, as being very agreeable to human nature; the which, not being corrupted or distempered by ill use, doth incline to it, doth call for it, doth like and approve it, doth find satisfaction and delight therein.

St Paul chargeth us to be, Εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι, or, *To have a natural affection one toward* Rom. xii.  
10.

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*another*: that supposeth a *στοργή* inbred to men, which should be roused up, improved, and exercised. Such an one indeed there is, which, although often raked up and smothered in the common attendances on the providing for our needs, and prosecuting our affairs, will upon occasion more or less break forth and discover itself.

That the constitution and frame of our nature disposeth to it, we cannot but feel, when our bowels are touched with a sensible pain at the view of any calamitous object; when our fancies are disturbed at the report of any disaster befalling a man; when the sight of a tragedy wringeth compassion and tears from us: which affections we can hardly quash by any reflection, that such events, true or feigned, do not concern ourselves.

Hence doth nature so strongly affect society, and abhor solitude<sup>a</sup>; so that a man cannot enjoy himself alone, or find satisfaction in any good without a companion: not only for that he then cannot receive, but also because he cannot impart assistance, consolation and delight in converse: for men do not affect society only that they may obtain benefits thereby; but as much or more, that they may be enabled to communicate them; nothing being more distasteful than to be always on the taking hand: neither indeed hath any thing a more

<sup>a</sup> Οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἔλοιτ' ἂν καθ' αὐτὸν τὰ πάντ' ἔχειν ἀγαθά.—Arist. Eth. x. 9. [3.]

Hominem homini natura conciliat.—Sen. Ep. ix. [15.]

Nullius boni, sine socio, jucunda possessio est.—Id. Ep. vi. [4.]

Καὶ γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς βουλόμενος συνδῆσαι πάντας ἀλλήλοις, τοιαύτην τοῖς πράγμασι ἐπέθηκεν ἀνάγκην, ὥς ἐν τῷ τοῦ πλησίον συμφέροντι τὸ τοῦ ἑτέρου δέδεσθαι· καὶ ὁ κόσμος ἅπας οὕτω συνέστηκε.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxv. [Opp. Tom. iii. p. 405.]

pleasant and savoury relish than to do good; as even Epicurus, the great patron of pleasure, did confess. SERM.  
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The practice of benignity, of courtesy, of clemency, do at first sight, without aid of any discursive reflection, obtain approbation and applause from men; being acceptable and amiable to their mind, as beauty to their sight, harmony to their hearing, fragrancy to their smell, and sweetness to their taste: and, correspondently, uncharitable dispositions and practices (malignity, harshness, cruelty) do offend the mind with a disgustful resentment of them.

We may appeal to the conscience of each man, if he doth not feel dissatisfaction in that fierceness or frowardness of temper, which produceth uncharitableness; if he have not a complacence in that sweet and calm disposition of soul, whence charity doth issue; if he do not condemn himself for the one, and approve himself in the other practice.

This is the common judgment of men; and therefore, in common language, this practice is styled humanity, as best sorting with our nature<sup>b</sup>, and becoming it; and the principle whence it springeth is called good-nature: and the contrary practice is styled inhumanity, as thwarting our natural inclinations, or divesting us of manhood; and its source likewise is termed ill-nature, or a corruption of our nature.

It is therefore a monstrous paradox, crossing the common sense of men, which, in this loose and

<sup>b</sup> *Εἰς γὰρ φιλανθρωπίας ἔργα ὑπὸ Θεοῦ κατεσκευάσθημεν.*—Flavian.  
Ep. CP. in Conc. Chalc. Act i. [apud Bin. Concil. Tom. III. p. 110. F.]

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vain world, hath lately got such vogue, that all men naturally are enemies one to another: it pretendeth to be grounded on common observation and experience; but it is only an observing the worst actions of the worst men; of dissolute ruffians, of villanous cheats, of ravenous oppressors, of malicious politicians, of such degenerate apostates from humanity; by whose practice (debauched by vain conceits and naughty customs) an ill measure is taken of mankind. Aristotle<sup>c</sup> himself, who had observed things as well as any of these men, and with as sharp a judgment, affirmeth the contrary, that all men are friends, and disposed to entertain friendly correspondence with one another: indeed to say the contrary is a blasphemy against the Author of our nature; and is spoken no less out of profane enmity against him, than out of venomous malignity against men: out of hatred to God and goodness they would disparage and vilify the noblest work of God's creation; yet do they, if we sound the bottom of their mind, imply themselves to admire this quality, and by their decrying it do commend it: for it is easy to discern, that therefore only they slander mankind as incapable of goodness, because out of malignity they would not allow it so excellent a quality.

<sup>c</sup> Οἰκεῖον ἅπας ἄνθρωπος ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ φίλον.—Arist. Eth. viii. [1, 3.] Cf. Rhet. i. ii.

Ἐνέθηκε γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς φίλτρον τῇ φύσει τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ, ὥστε ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν.—Chrys. in Eph. Orat. ii. [Opp. Tom. iii. p. 771.]

Συνδεσμῶν γὰρ εἰς ὁμογνωμοσύνην ὁ ἀριστοτέχνης Θεὸς, ἣν ἐδημιούργησε φύσιν, τῇ διαθέσει τοὺς λόγῳ διοικουμένους συνέσφιγξε, &c.—Proclus Episc. Conc. Chalco. Act. xiv. [apud Bin. Concil. Tom. iii. p. 424 c.]

II. Let us consider what our neighbour is ; SERM.  
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how near in blood, how like in nature, how much, in all considerable respects, the same with us he is<sup>d</sup>.

Should any one wrong or defame our brother, we should be displeased ; should we do it ourselves, or should we omit any office of kindness toward him, we should blame ourselves : every man is such, of one stock, of one blood with us ; and as such may challenge and call for real affection from us.

Should any one mar, tear, or deface our picture, or shew any kind of disrespect thereto, we should be offended, taking it for an indignity put on ourselves ; and as for ourselves, we should never in such a manner affront or despise ourselves : every man is such, our most lively image, representing us most exactly in all the main figures and features of body, of soul, of state ; we thence do owe respect to every one.

Every man is another self, partaker of the same nature, endued with the same faculties, subject to the same laws, liable to the same fortunes ; distinguished from us only in accidental and variable circumstances ; whence if we be amiable or estimable, so is he upon the same grounds ; and acting impartially (according to right judgment) we should yield love and esteem to him : by slighting, hating, injuring, hurting him, we do consequentially abuse ourselves, or acknowledge ourselves deservedly liable to the same usage.

Every man, as a Christian, is in a higher and nobler way allied, assimilated, and identified to us ;

<sup>d</sup> Δι' ὁμοιότητος πάντα φιλεῖ πρὸς ἀλλήλα συνάπτεσθαι.—Plato Symp. [?].



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to him therefore, upon the like grounds improved, charity is more due; and we wrong our heavenly relations, our better nature, our more considerable selves, in withholding it from him.

III. Equity doth plainly require charity from us: for every one is ready not only to wish and seek, but to demand and claim love from others; so as to be much offended, and grievously to complain, if he do not find it.

We do all conceive love and respect due to us from all men; we take all men bound to wish and tender our welfare; we suppose our need to require commiseration and succour from every man: if it be refused, we think it a hard case, and that we are ill used; we cry out of wrong, of discourtesy, of inhumanity, of baseness, practised toward us.

A moderate respect and affection will hardly satisfy us; we pretend to them in the highest degree, disgusting the least appearance of disregard or disaffection; we can scarce better digest indifference than hatred.

This evidenceth our opinion and conscience to be, that we ought to pay the greatest respect and kindness to our neighbour: for it is plainly unjust and ridiculously vain, to require that from others, which we refuse to others, who may demand it upon the same title; nor can we, without self-condemnation, practise that which we detest in others.

In all reason and equity, if I would have another my friend, I must be a friend to him; if I pretend to charity from all men, I must render it to all, in the same kind and measure.

Matt. vii.  
12.

Hence is the law of charity well expressed in those terms, of doing to others whatever we would

have them do to us; whereby the palpable equity of this practice is demonstrated. SERM.  
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IV. Let us consider that charity is a right noble and worthy thing; greatly perfective of our nature; much dignifying and beautifying our soul.

It rendereth a man truly great, enlarging his mind unto a vast circumference, and to a capacity near infinite; so that it, by a general care, doth reach all things, by an universal affection doth embrace and grasp the world.

By it our reason obtaineth a field or scope of employment worthy of it, not confined to the slender interests of one person or one place, but extending to the concerns of all men.

Charity is the imitation and copy of that immense love, which is the fountain of all being and all good; which made all things, which preserveth the world, which sustaineth every creature: nothing advanceth us so near to a resemblance of him, who is essential love and goodness<sup>e</sup>; who freely and purely, without any regard to his own advantage or capacity of finding any beneficial return, doth bear and express the highest good-will, with a liberal hand pouring down showers of bounty and mercy on all his creatures; who daily putteth up with numberless indignities and injuries, upholding and maintaining those who offend and provoke him<sup>f</sup>.

Charity rendereth us as Angels, or peers to

<sup>e</sup> Ἡμᾶς δὲ εἴ τις ἐρωτήσῃ, τί τὸ τιμώμενον ὑμῖν καὶ προσκυνούμενον; πρόχειρον εἰπεῖν, ἡ ἀγάπη. ὁ γὰρ Θεὸς ἡμῶν ἡ ἀγάπη ἐστὶ, ῥῆσις τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος, καὶ τοῦτο χαίρει μᾶλλον ἀκούων, ἢ τι ἄλλο, ὁ Θεός.—Greg. Naz. [Or. xxii. Opp. Tom. i. p. 416 B.] Cf. Chrys. in Eph. Orat. ix. [Opp. Tom. iii. p. 814.]

<sup>f</sup> Καθ' ἐκάστην ὑβρίζειται τὴν ἡμέραν, παρῶν καὶ ὁρῶν καὶ ἀκούων, καὶ οὔτε σκηπτὸν ἀφῆκε, &c.—Id. Ἀνδρ. γ'. [Tom. vi. p. 480.]

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those glorious and blessed creatures, who, without receiving or expecting any requital from us, do heartily desire and delight in our good, are ready to promote it, do willingly serve and labour for it. Nothing is more amiable, more admirable, more venerable, even in the common eye and opinion of men; it hath in it a beauty and a majesty apt to ravish every heart; even a spark of it, in generosity of dealing, breedeth admiration, a glimpse of it, in formal courtesy of behaviour, procureth much esteem, being deemed to accomplish and adorn a man: how lovely therefore and truly gallant is an entire, sincere, constant and uniform practice thereof, issuing from pure good-will and affection!

Love indeed or goodness (for true love is nothing else but goodness exerting itself in direction toward objects capable of its influence) is the only amiable and only honourable thing: power and wit may be admired by some, or have some fond idolaters; but being severed from goodness, or abstracted from their subserviency to it, they cannot obtain real love, they deserve not any esteem: for the worst, the most unhappy, the most odious and contemptible of beings do partake of them in a high measure; the prince of darkness hath more power, and reigneth with absolute sovereignty over more subjects by many, than the great Turk; one devil may have more wit than all the politic Achitophels, and all the profane Hectors in the world; yet with all his power and all his wit he is most wretched, most detestable, and most despicable: and such in proportion is every one, who partaketh in his accursed dispositions of malice and uncharitableness. For,

On the other side, uncharitableness is a very mean and base thing : it contracteth a man's soul into a narrow compass, or straiteneth it as it were into one point<sup>s</sup>; drawing all his thoughts, his desires, his affections into himself, as to their centre; so that his reason, his will, his activity have but one pitiful object to exercise themselves about: to scrape together a little pelf, to catch a vapour of fame, to prog for a frivolous semblance of power or dignity, to soothe the humour or pamper the sensuality of one poor worm, is the ignoble subject of his busy care and endeavour.

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By it we debase ourselves into an affinity with the meanest things, becoming either like beasts or fiends: like beasts, affecting only our own present sensible good; or like fiends, designing mischief and trouble to others.

It is indeed hard for a man without charity, not to be worse than an innocent beast; not at least to be as a fox, or a wolf; either cunningly lurching, or violently ravening for prey: love only can restrain a man from flying at all, and seizing on whatever he meeteth; from biting, from worrying, from devouring every one that is weaker than himself, or who cannot defend himself from his paws and teeth.

Ezek. xxii.  
27.

V. The practice of charity is productive of many great benefits and advantages to us: so that to love our neighbour doth involve the truest love to ourselves; and we are not only obliged in duty,

<sup>s</sup> Sen. de Tranq. An. Cap. iii. 6. [Nam si omnem conversationem tollimus, et generi humano renuntiamus, vivimusque in nos tantum conversi; sequetur hanc solitudinem omni studio carentem, inopia rerum agendarum.]

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but may be encouraged by our interest thereto : beatitude is often pronounced to it, or to some particular instances of it ; and well may it be so, for it indeed will constitute a man happy, producing to him manifold comforts and conveniences of life : some whereof we shall touch.

VI. (1) Charity doth free our souls of all those bad dispositions and passions, which vex and disquiet them ; from those gloomy passions, which cloud our mind ; from those keen passions, which fret our heart ; from those tumultuous passions, which ruffle us, and discompose the frame of our soul<sup>h</sup>.

It stiflcth anger, (that swoon of reason, transporting a man out of himself ;) for a man hardly can be incensed against those whom he tenderly loveth : a petty neglect, a hard word, a small discourtesy will not fire a charitable soul ; the greatest affront or wrong can hardly kindle rage therein.

It banisheth envy, (that severely just vice<sup>i</sup>, which never faileth to punish itself ;) for no man will repine at his wealth or prosperity, no man will malign his worth or virtue, whose good he charitably desireth and wisheth.

It excludeth rancour and spite, those dispositions which create a hell in our soul, which are directly repugnant to charity, and thereby dispelled, as darkness by light, cold by heat.

<sup>h</sup> Ὁ γὰρ τοιοῦτος καὶ φθόνου καὶ ὀργῆς καὶ βασκανίας καὶ ἀπειροίας καὶ κενοδοξίας, καὶ πονηρᾶς ἐπιθυμίας, καὶ παντὸς ἔρωτος ἀτόπου, καὶ παντὸς νοσήματος καθαρεύουσιν διατηρήσει τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Orat. xxxii. [Opp. Tom. iii. p. 454.]

<sup>i</sup> Ὁ φθόνος ἡ δαπάνη τῶν ἐχόντων, ὁ τῶν πασχόντων ἰός, τὸ μόνον τῶν παθῶν ἀδικώτατόν τε ἅμα καὶ δικαιοτάτον· τὸ μὲν, ὅτι πᾶσι διοχλεῖ τοῖς καλοῖς· τὸ δέ, ὅτι τήκει τοὺς ἔχοντας.—Greg. Naz. [Or. xxxvi. Opp. Tom. i. p. 637 D.]

It suffereth not revenge (that canker of the heart) to harbour in our breast; for who can intend mischief to him, in whose good he delighteth, in whose evil he feeleth displeasure?

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It voideth fear, suspicion, jealousy of mischief designed against us: the which passions have torment, or do punish us, as St John saith, rack-  
ing us with anxious expectation of evil<sup>k</sup>; where-  
fore, *There is*, saith he, *no fear in love; but perfect* <sup>1 John iv. 18.</sup>  
*love casteth out fear*: no man indeed is apt to  
fear him whom he loveth, or is able much to love  
him whom he feareth: for love esteemeth its object  
as innocent, fear apprehendeth it as hurtful; love  
disposeth to follow and embrace, fear inclineth to  
decline and shun. To suspect a friend therefore is  
to disavow him for such; and upon slender grounds  
to conceit ill of him, is to deem him unworthy  
of our love. The innocence and inoffensiveness  
of charity, which provoketh no man to do us harm,  
doth also breed great security and confidence: any  
man will think he may walk unarmed and unguard-  
ed among those to whom he beareth good-will, to  
whom he neither meaneth nor doeth any harm;  
being guarded by a good conscience, and shielded  
with innocence.

It removeth discontent or dissatisfaction in our  
state; the which usually doth spring from ill conceits  
and surmises about our neighbour, or from wrath-  
ful and spiteful affections toward him: for while  
men have good respect and kindness for their  
neighbours, they seldom are dissatisfied in their  
own condition; they can never want comfort, or  
despair of succour.

<sup>k</sup> Quem metuunt, oderunt. [Ennius apud Cic. de Off. ii. 7, 23.]

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It curbeth ambition and avarice ; those impetuous, those insatiable, those troublesome dispositions : for a man will not affect to climb above those, in whose honour he findeth satisfaction ; nor to scramble with them for the goods, which he gladly would have them to enjoy : a competency will satisfy him, who taketh himself but for one among the rest, and who can as little endure to see others want as himself : who would trouble himself to get power over those, to overtop them in dignity and fame, to surpass them in wealth, whom he is ready to serve in the meanest offices of kindness, whom he would in honour prefer to himself, unto whom he will liberally communicate what he hath for his comfort and relief<sup>1</sup>?

In the prevalence of such bad passions and dispositions of soul our misery doth most consist ; thence the chief troubles and inconveniences of our life do proceed : wherefore charity doth highly deserve of us in freeing us from them.

VII. (2) It consequently doth settle our mind in a serene, calm, sweet, and cheerful state ; in an even temper, and good humour, and harmonious order of soul ; which ever will result from the evacuation of bad passions, from the composure of such as are indifferent, from the excitement of those which are good and pleasant : *The fruits of the Spirit*, saith St Paul, *are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness*, (or benignity :) love precedeth, joy and peace follow, as its constant attendants, gentleness and benignity come after, as its certain effects.

Gal. v. 22.  
Eph. v. 9.  
Col. iii. 12.

<sup>1</sup> Κατὰ γὰρ τοῦ ἀγαπώμενου οὐκ ἂν τις ἐπαρθείη ποτέ.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxxii. [Opp. Tom. iii. p. 454.]

Love indeed is the sweetest of all passions, ever accompanied with a secret delectation and pleasant sense; whenever it is placed upon a good object, when it acteth in a rational way, when it is vigorous, it must needs yield much joy. SERM.  
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It therefore greatly conduceth to our happiness, or rather alone doth suffice to constitute us happy.

VIII. (3) Charity will preserve us from divers external mischiefs and inconveniences, to which our life is exposed, and which otherwise we shall incur.

If we have not charity towards men, we shall have enmity with them; and upon that do wait troops of mischief: we shall enjoy nothing quietly or safely, we shall do nothing without opposition or contention; no conversation, no commerce will be pleasant; clamour, obloquy, tumult, and trouble will surround us; we shall live in perpetual danger, the enmity of the meanest and weakest creature being formidable.

But all such mischiefs charity will prevent or remove; damming up the fountains, or extirpating the roots of them: for who will hate a person that apparently loveth him? who can be so barbarous or base as to hurt that man, whom he findeth ever ready to do himself good? what brute, what devil can find in his heart to be a foe to him who is a sure friend to all<sup>m</sup>? No publican can be so wretch-

<sup>m</sup> Τίς δ' ἂν καὶ ἐχθρὸς εὐλόγως γένοιτο ἀνδρὸς οὐδεμίαν οὐδαμῶς παρέχοντος αἰτίαν ἔχθρας;—Olem. Alex. Strom. vii. [Opp. Tom. ii. p. 873.]

Κἂν θηρίον ἐκεῖνος ᾗ, κἂν λίθος, κἂν ὄτιον, ὑπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς φιλοφροσύνης ἡμερωθήσεται.—Chrys. in 1 Thess. Orat. iv. [Opp. Tom. iv. p. 185 ]



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XXX. *If*, saith our Lord, upon common experience, *ye*  
Matt. v. *love them which love you, what reward have ye?*  
46. *do not even the publicans the same?* and, *If ye*  
Luke vi. *do good to them which do good to you, what thank*  
33. *have ye?* for sinners also do even the same: it  
seemeth beyond the greatest degeneracy and cor-  
ruption whereof human nature is capable, to requite  
charity with enmity, yea not to return some kind-  
ness for it: Τίς ὁ κακώσων ὑμᾶς; *Who*, saith St Peter,  
1 Pet. iii. *is he that will do you hurt, if ye be followers of that*  
13. *which is good?* or imitators of him that is good, (of  
the sovereign goodness:) none surely can be so  
unjust or so unworthy.

As charity restraineth us from doing any  
wrong, or yielding any offence to others in thought,  
in word, in deed; from entertaining any bad conceits  
without ground, from hatching any mischievous  
designs against our neighbour; from using any  
harsh, virulent, biting language; from any rugged,  
discourteous, disobliging behaviour; from any  
wrongful, rigorous, severe dealing toward him;  
from any contemptuous pride, or supercilious arro-  
gance: so it consequently will defend us from the  
like treatment; for scarce any man is so malicious,  
as without any provocation to do mischief; no  
man is so incorrigibly savage, as to persist in  
committing outrage upon perfect innocence<sup>a</sup>, joined  
with patience, with meekness, with courtesy: cha-  
rity will melt the hardest heart, and charm the

Οὐδεὶς ἐχθρὸς τῷ σπουδαίῳ.—Hierocles [in Aur. Carm. Com.  
p. 74.]

Οὐχ οὐδὲν τε τὸν ἀγαπώμενον μὴ καὶ ἀγαπᾷν.—Chrys. in Gen. [Or.  
LVIII. Tom. I. p. 458.]

<sup>a</sup> Vincit malos pertinax bonitas.—Sen. [de Benef. VII. 31.]

fiercest spirit ; it will bind the most violent hand, it will still the most obstreperous tongue ; it will reconcile the most offended, most prejudiced heart: it is the best guard that can be of our safety from assaults, of our interest from damage, of our reputation from slander, detraction, and reproach<sup>p</sup>. SERM.  
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If you would have examples of this, experience will afford many; and some we have in the sacred records commended to our observation: Esau was a rough man, and one who had been exceedingly provoked by his brother Jacob ; yet how did meek and respectful demeanour overcome him! so that *Esau*, it is said in the history, *ran to meet him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.* Gen. xxxii. 20; xxxiii. 4.

Saul was a man possessed with a furious envy and spite against David; yet into what expressions did the sense of his kind dealing force him! *Is this thy voice, my son David?—Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil:—behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.* So doth charity subdue and triumph over the most inveterate prejudices, and the most violent passions of men. 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17; xxvi. 17, 21.

If peace and quiet be desirable things, as certainly they are, and that form implieth, when by wishing peace with men, we are understood to wish all good to them; it is charity only that preserveth them: which more surely than any power or policy

<sup>p</sup> *Carbones ignis congregabis super caput ejus; non in maledictum et condemnationem, ut plerique existimant, sed in correctionem et pœnitudinem; ut superatus beneficiis, excoctus fervore caritatis, inimicus esse desistat.*—Hier. adv. Pelag. i. [Opp. Tom. iv. p. ii. col. 503.]

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— doth quash all war and strife<sup>a</sup>; for war must have parties, and strife implieth resistance: be it the first or second blow which maketh the fray, charity will avoid it; for it neither will strike the first in offence, nor the second in revenge. Charity Eph. iv. 3. therefore may well be styled, *The bond of peace*, it being that only, which can knit men's souls together, and keep them from breaking out into dissensions.

It alone is that which will prevent bickering and clashing about points of credit or interest: if we love not our neighbour, or tender not his good as our own, we shall be ever in competition and debate with him about those things, not suffering him to enjoy any thing quietly; struggling to get above him, scrambling with him for what is to be had.

IX. (4) As charity preserveth from mischiefs, so it procureth many sweet comforts and fair accommodations of life.

Friendship is a most useful and pleasant thing, and charity will conciliate good store thereof: it is apt to make all men friends; for love is the only general philter and effectual charm of souls<sup>r</sup>; the fire which kindleth all it toucheth, and propagateth itself in every capable subject: and such a subject is every man, in whom humanity is not quite extinct; and hardly can any such man be, seeing every man hath some good humour in him, some blood, some kindly juice flowing in his veins; no man wholly

<sup>a</sup> Cadit statim similtas ab altera parte deserta.—Sen. de Ir. II. 34.

<sup>r</sup> Ego tibi monstrabo amatorium, sine medicamento, sine herba, sine ullius veneficæ carmine. Si vis amari, ama.—Id. Ep. IX. [4.]

doth consist of dusky melancholy, or fiery choler; whence all men may be presumed liable to the powerful impressions of charity: its mild and serene countenance, its sweet and gentle speech, its courteous and obliging gesture, its fair dealing, its benign conversation, its readiness to do any good or service to any man, will insinuate good-will and respect into all hearts.

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It thence will encompass a man with friends, with many guards of his safety, with many supports of his fortune, with many patrons of his reputation, with many succourers of his necessity, with many comforters of his affliction: for is a charitable man in danger, who will not defend him? is he falling, who will not uphold him? is he falsely accused or aspersed, who will not vindicate him? is he in distress, who will not pity him? who will not endeavour to relieve and restore him? who will insult over his calamity? will it not in such cases appear a common duty, a common interest to assist and countenance a common friend, a common benefactor to mankind?

Whereas most of our life is spent in society and discourse, charity is that which doth season and sweeten these, rendering them grateful to others, and commodious to one's self: for a charitable heart is a sweet spring, from whence do issue streams of wholesome and pleasant discourse; it, not being troubled with any bad passion or design which may sour or foul conversation, doth ever make him good company to others, and rendereth them such to himself; which is a mighty convenience. In short, *A charitable man, or, true lover of men will*, saith St Chrysostom, *inhabit earth as a heaven*,

Prov. xv.  
26; xvi.  
24.

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*every where carrying a serenity with him, and plaiting ten thousand crowns for himself<sup>s</sup>. Again,*

X. (5) Charity doth in every estate yield advantages suitable thereto; bettering it, and improving it to our benefit.

It rendereth prosperity not only innocent and safe, but useful and fruitful to us; we then indeed enjoy it, if we feel the comfort of doing good by it: it solaceth adversity, considering that it doth not arise as a punishment or fruit of ill-doing to others; that it is not attended with the deserved ill-will of men; that no man hath reason to delight for it, or insult over us therein; that we may probably expect commiseration and relief, having been ready to shew the like to others.

It tempereth both states: for in prosperity a man cannot be transported with immoderate joy, when so many objects of pity and grief do present themselves before him, which he is apt deeply to resent; in adversity he cannot be dejected with extreme sorrow, being refreshed by so many good successes befalling those whom he loveth: one condition will not puff him up, being sensible of his neighbour's misery; the other will not sink him down, having complacence in his neighbour's welfare. Uncharitableness (proceeding from contrary causes, and producing contrary effects) doth spoil all conditions, rendering prosperity fruitless, and adversity comfortless.

XI. (6) We may consider, that secluding the exercise of charity, all the goods and advantages we

<sup>s</sup> Τὴν γῆν οὕτως ὡς τὸν οὐρανὸν οἰκήσει, πανταχοῦ γαλήνης ἀπολαύων, καὶ μυρίους ἑαυτῷ πλέκων στεφάνους.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxxii. [Opp. Tom. iii. p. 454.]

have (our best faculties of nature, our best endowments of soul, the gifts of Providence, and the fruits of our industry) will become vain and fruitless, or noxious and baneful to us ; for what is our reason worth, what doth it signify, if it serveth only for contriving sorry designs, or transacting petty affairs about ourselves ? what is wit good for, if it must be spent only in making sport, or hatching mischief ? to what purpose is knowledge, if it be not applied to the instruction, direction, admonition, or consolation of others ? what mattereth abundance of wealth, if it be to be uselessly hoarded up, or vainly flung away in wicked or wanton profuseness ; if it be not employed in affording succour to our neighbour's indigency and distress ? what is our credit but a mere noise or a puff of air, if we do not give a solidity and substance to it, by making it an engine of doing good ? what is our virtue itself, if it be buried in obscurity or choked with idleness<sup>t</sup>, yielding no benefit to others by the lustre of its example, or by its real influence ? what is any talent, if it be wrapt up in a napkin ; any light, if it be hid under a bushel ; any thing private, if it be not by good use spread out and improved to public benefit ? If these gifts do minister only to our own particular advantage, to our personal convenience, glory, or pleasure, how slim things are they, how inconsiderable is their worth !

But they, being managed by charity, become precious and excellent things ; they are great in proportion to the greatness of their use, or the

<sup>t</sup> Paullum sepultæ distat inertiae  
Celata virtus.

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Luke vi. 38.  
John xv. 8.  
Phil. i. 11.  
Matt. v. 16.  
2 Cor. ix. 11.  
1 Cor. xiii.

Uncharitableness therefore should be loathed and shunned by us, as that which robbeth us of all our ornaments and advantages ; which indeed marreth and corrupteth all our good things ; which turneth blessings into curses, and rendereth the means of our welfare to be causes of mischief to us : for without charity a man can have no goods, but goods worldly and temporal ; and such goods thence do prove impertinent baubles, burdensome encumbrances, dangerous snares, baneful poisons to him.

XII. (7) Charity doth hugely advance and amplify a man's state, putting him into the possession or fruition of all good things ; it will endow, enrich, ennoble, embellish us with all the world hath of precious, of glorious, of fair ; by appropriation thereof to ourselves, and acquiring of a real interest therein. What men commonly, out of fond self-love, do vainly affect, that infallibly, by being charitable, they may compass, the engrossing to themselves all kinds of good : most easily, most innocently, in a compendious and sure way, without any sin or blame, without any care or pain, without any dan-

ger or trouble, they may come to attain and to enjoy whatever, in common esteem, is desirable or valuable; they may, without greedy avarice, or the carkings, the drudgeries, the disgraces going with it, procure to themselves abundant wealth; without fond ambition, or the difficulties, the hazards, the emulations, the strugglings to which it is liable, they may arrive to great honour; without sordid voluptuousness, or the satieties, the maladies, the regrets consequent thereon, they may enjoy all pleasure; without any wildness or wantonness, pride, luxury, sloth, any of its temptations and snares, they may have all prosperity; they may get all learning and wisdom without laborious study, all virtue and goodness without the fatigues of continual exercise: for are not all these things yours, if you do esteem them so, if you do make them so by finding much delight and satisfaction in them? doth not your neighbour's wealth enrich you, if you feel content in his possessing and using it? doth not his preferment advance you, if your spirit riseth with it in a gladsome complacence? doth not his pleasure delight you, if you relish his enjoyment of it? doth not his prosperity bless you, if your heart doth exult and triumph in it? do not his endowments adorn you, if you like them, if you commend them, if the use of them doth minister comfort and joy to you? This is the divine magic of charity, which conveyeth all things into our hands, and instateth us in a dominion of them, whereof nothing can disseize us; by virtue whereof, *Being,* <sup>2 Cor. vi.</sup> as St Paul speaketh of himself, *sorrowful, we yet* <sup>10.</sup> *always rejoice; having nothing, we yet possess all things.*

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Neither is this property in things merely imaginary or fantastic, (like that of lunatics, who fancy themselves mighty princes or rich aldermen,) but very substantial and real; yea, far more real to the charitable person, than it is commonly to those, who in legal or popular account, are masters of them: for how is propriety in things otherwise considerable, than for the content and pleasure which they yield to the presumed owner? the which if a charitable person abundantly draweth from them, why are they not truly his? why is not the tree his, if he can pull and taste its fruits without injury or blame? yea doth not the propriety more really belong to him as to the gross possessor, if he doth equally enjoy the benefit, without partaking the inconveniences and impurities adherent to them; if he taste them innocently and purely, without being cloyed, without being distracted, without being puffed, without being encumbered, ensnared, or corrupted by them?

Rom. xii.  
15.

A charitable man therefore can never, in a moral account, be poor, or vile, or anywise miserable; except all the world should be cast into penury and distress: for while his neighbour hath any thing, he will enjoy it; *Rejoicing with those that rejoice*, as the Apostle doth enjoin.

XIII. (8) If therefore we love ourselves, we must love others, and do others good; charitable beneficence carrying with it so many advantages to ourselves.

We, by charitable complacence, do partake in their welfare, reaping pleasure from all the fruits of their industry and fortune.

We, by charitable assistance, do enable and dis-

pose them to make grateful returns of succour in our need. SERM.  
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We, thence, assuredly shall obtain their goodwill, their esteem, their commendation; we shall maintain peaceable and comfortable intercourse with them, in safety, in quiet, in good humour and cheer.

Besides all other benefits we shall get that of their prayers; the which of all prayers have a most favourable audience and assured efficacy: for if the complaints and curses of those, who are oppressed or neglected by uncharitable dealing, do certainly reach God's ears, and pull down vengeance from above; how much more will the intercessions and blessings of the poor pierce the heavens, and thence draw recompense! seeing God is more ready to perform his proper and pleasant works of bounty and mercy, than to execute his strange and displeasing work of punishment; especially, the blessings of the poor being always accompanied with praises and glorifications of him, who enableth and disposeth men to do good; the which praises will ever be reckoned on the account of him who drew them forth by his beneficence: it will be, as the Apostle saith, *Fruit redounding to his account, while it aboundeth by many thanksgivings to God.*

James v. 4.  
Deut. xxiv.  
15.  
Ecclus. iv.  
6.

Ps. lxii. 2.  
Mic. vii.  
18.  
Isai.  
xxviii. 21.

Phil. iv.  
17.  
2 Cor. ix.  
12; viii.  
19.

So, in virtue of charity, the poorest man amply may requite the wealthiest; and a peasant may outdo the greatest prince in beneficence.

XIV. We may consider, that charity is a practice specially grateful to God, and a most excellent part of our duty; not only because he hath commanded it as such with greatest earnestness; nor only because it doth constitute us in nearest re-

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Ezek. xviii.  
31, 32.

semblance of him; but as a peculiar expression of love and good-will toward him: for if we love him, we must, for his sake, have a kindness for his friends, we must tender his interests, we must favour his reputation, we must desire his content and pleasure, we must contribute our endeavours toward the furtherance of these his concerns. Seeing then God is an assured friend to all men, seeing he hath a property in all men, (for he is God and Lord of all,) seeing he much concerneth himself for all men's welfare; seeing from the prosperity, from the virtue, from the happiness of every man he gaineth honour and praise; seeing he is greatly satisfied and delighted in the good of men; we also must love them; otherwise we greatly shall disoblige and disgust him.

Is it not indeed a practice guilty of notorious enmity toward him, inconsistent with the maintenance of any friendship or peace with him, to discord in affection from him, maligning or disaffecting those whom he dearly loveth and favour-eth; who are so nearly allied to him by manifold relations, as his creatures, his subjects, his servants, his children, whom he designeth and desireth to crown with eternal glory and bliss<sup>u</sup>?

XV. Seeing God vouchsafeth to esteem whatever is done in charity to our neighbour (if done with an honest and pious mind, as to his friends) to be done unto himself; that in feeding our indi-

<sup>u</sup> Ὅταν στυγῇ τις ἄνδρα, τὸν Θεὸς φιλεῖ,  
οὗτος μεγίστην μωρίαν κατεισάγει.  
φανερῶς γὰρ αὐτῷ τῷ Θεῷ κορύσσεται.  
\* \* \* \*

δεῖ γὰρ φιλεῖν ἐκεῖνον, ὃν Θεὸς φιλεῖ.—

[Pallad. lxxi. Anthol. Gr. Ed. Jacobs. Tom. iii. p. 129.]

gent neighbour we refresh him; in clothing our neighbour we comfort him; we do by charitable beneficence oblige God, and become in a manner benefactors to him; and as such assuredly shall be requited by him: and is not this a high privilege, a great honour, a mighty advantage to us? If a man had opportunity to do that, which his prince would acknowledge a courtesy and obligation to him, what a happiness would he account it! and how far more considerable is it, that we can so easily do that which the Lord of all, in whose disposal all things are, will take so kindly at our hands!

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XVI. We may consider, that charity is a very feasible and very easy duty; it requireth no sore pain, no grievous trouble, no great cost: for it consisteth only in good-will, and that which naturally springeth thence; willingness and cheerfulness are necessary ingredients or adjuncts of it; the which imply facility<sup>x</sup>: whence the weakest and poorest man is no less able to perform it, than the greatest potentate; his heart may be as charitable, though his hand cannot be so liberal: one of the most noble and most famous charities that ever was, was the giving two mites; and the giving a cup of cold water is the instance of that beneficence, which shall not fail of being rewarded<sup>y</sup>.

Rom. xii.  
8.  
2 Cor. ix.  
7; viii. 12.

Luke xxi.

2.

Matt. x.

42.

XVII. We may consider, that charity is the best, the most assured, the most easy and expedite

<sup>x</sup> Ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη μετὰ τοῦ κέρδους πολλὴν ἔχει καὶ τὴν ἡδονὴν, καὶ πόνον οὐδένα.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxxii. [Opp. Tom. iii. p. 455.]

Ποῖος πόνος μὴ κακῶς εἰπεῖν μηδένα; ποία δυσκολία ἀπαλλαγῆναι φθόνου καὶ βασκανίας; ποῖος μόχθος ἀγαπᾶν τὸν πλησίον;—Id. Ἄνδρ. ή. [Tom. vi. p. 518.]

<sup>y</sup> At nunc cum omnia quæ difficiliora sunt, vel modica ex parte faciamus, hoc solum non facimus, quod et factu facilius est; et abs-

SERM. way or instrument of performing all other duties  
XXX. toward our neighbour: if we would despatch, love,

Rom. xiii. love, and we shall not fail in any point; for, *Love*  
10. *is the fulfilling of the law; Love is the bond of per-*  
Gal. v. 14. *fectness:* would we be secure in the practice of jus-  
Col. iii. 14. tice, of meekness, of humility toward all men, of

constant fidelity toward our friends, of gentle mo-  
deration toward our enemies, of loyalty toward our  
superiors, or benignity toward our inferiors; if we  
would be sure to purify our minds from ill thoughts,  
to restrain our tongues from ill speaking, to abstain  
from all bad demeanour and dealing; it is but  
having charity, and infallibly you will do this: for

Rom. xiii. *Love worketh no ill to its neighbour; Love thinketh*  
10. *no evil; Love behaveth not itself unseemly.*

5.

Would we discharge all our duties without any  
reluctancy or regret, with much satisfaction and  
pleasure? love will certainly dispose us thereto; for  
it always acteth freely and cheerfully, without any  
compulsion or straining<sup>a</sup>; it is ever accompanied  
with delectation<sup>a</sup>: if we would know its way and  
virtue of acting, we may see it represented in the  
proceeding of Jacob, who, being inspired by love,  
did contentedly and without regret endure so long  
and hard toil, such disappointments and such

Gen. xxix. *affronts: And Jacob, saith the text, served seven*  
20.

que quo cassa sunt universa quæ facimus. Jejunii corpus sentit  
injuriam; vigilæ carnem macerant—Hæc omnia sunt qui faciant:  
sola caritas sine labore est.—Hier. in Gal. v. 13, 14. [Opp. Tom.  
iv. p. i. col. 296.]

<sup>a</sup> It is winged. It is fire.

<sup>a</sup> Εἰ γὰρ ἅπαντες ἡγαπῶν καὶ ἡγαπῶντο, οὐδὲν ἂν ἠδίκησεν οὐδεὶς,  
&c.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxxii. [Tom. iii. p. 454.]

Amor obsequitur sponte, gratis obtemperat, libere reveretur.—  
Bern. ad Eug. Prol. [Opp. Tom. i. p. 414.] Vid. Bern. Ep. xi.

*years for Rachel ; and they seemed to him but a few days for the love he had to her.* SERM.  
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This is the root, from whence voluntary obedience doth naturally grow<sup>b</sup>; if it be planted in our heart, we need not fear but that all kind of good fruit will sprout forth into conversation and practice.

But without it, we shall not ever perform any good work perfectly, steadily, in a kindly manner: no other principle will serve; if we are only moved by whip and spur, driven on by fear, or incited by hope, we shall go forward unwillingly and dully, often halting, ever flagging: those principles which do put slaves and mercenaries on action, as they are not so noble and worthy, so neither are they so effectual and sure; as ambition, vain-glory, self-interest, design of security, of profit, of compliance with the expectation of men, &c.

XVIII. Charity giveth worth, form, and life to all virtue, so that without it, no action is valuable in itself, or acceptable to God<sup>c</sup>.

Sever it from courage; and what is that, but the boldness or fierceness of a beast? from meekness; and what is that, but the softness of a woman, or weakness of a child? from courtesy; and what is that, but affectation or artifice? from justice; what is that, but humour or policy? from wisdom; what is that, but craft and subtlety?

What meaneth faith without it, but dry opinion; what hope, but blind presumption; what alms-doing, but ambitious ostentation; what undergoing martyrdom, but stiffness or sturdiness of

<sup>b</sup> 'Ο γὰρ φιλῶν οὐχ οὕτως ἐπιτάττων, ὡς ἐπιταττόμενος χαίρει, &c.  
—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. xxxii. [Tom. iii. p. 455.]

<sup>c</sup> Vid. Chrys. in 1 Cor. Orat. xxv. [Tom. iii. p. 406.]

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1 Cor. xiii.  
2, 3.

resolution ; what is devotion, but glozing or mocking with God? what is any practice, how specious soever in appearance, or materially good, but an issue of self-conceit or self-will, of servile fear or mercenary design? *Though I have faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing ; though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

But charity doth sanctify every action, and impregnate all our practice with a savour of goodness, turning all we do into virtue; it is true fortitude and gallantry indeed, when a man, out of charity and hearty design to promote his neighbour's good, doth encounter dangers and difficulties; it is genuine meekness, when a man, out of charity and unwillingness to hurt his neighbour, doth patiently comport with injuries and discourtesies; it is virtuous courtesy, when cordial affection venteth itself in civil language, in respectful deportment, in obliging performances; it is excellent justice, when a man, regarding his neighbour's case as his own, doth unto him as he would have it done to himself; it is admirable wisdom, which sagaciously contriveth and dexterously manageth things with the best advantage toward its neighbour's good: it is a worthy faith, which, being spirited and actuated by charity, doth produce goodly fruits of beneficence; it is a sound and solid hope, which is grounded on that everlasting foundation of charity, which never doth fail, or fall away; it is sincere alms, which not only the hand, but the heart doth reach forth; it is an acceptable sacrifice, which is kindled by the holy fire of fervent affection; it is a pure devotion, which

Gal. v. 6.  
James ii.  
26.

1 Cor. xiii.  
8.

is offered up with a calm and benign mind, resembling the disposition of that goodness which it adoreth.

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1 Tim. ii.  
8.

Matt. v.  
23.

If therefore we would do any thing well, if we would not lose all the virtue, and forfeit all the benefit of what we perform, we must follow the rule of St Paul, *To do all our works in charity.*

1 Cor. xvi.  
14.

XIX. So great benefits doth charity yield; yet, if it did not yield any of them, it would deserve and claim our observance; without regard to its sweet fruits and beneficial consequences, it were to be embraced and cherished; for it carrieth a reward and a heaven in itself; the very same which constituteth God himself infinitely happy, and which beatifieth every blessed spirit, in proportion to its capacity and exercise thereof: a man doth abundantly enjoy himself in that steady composedness, and savoury complacency of mind, which ever doth attend it; and as the present sense, so is the memory of it, or the good conscience of having done good, very delicious and satisfactory.

As it is a rascally delight (tempered with regret, and vanishing into bitterness) which men feel in wreaking spite, or doing mischief; such as they cannot reflect upon, without disgust and condemning their base impotency of soul: so is the pleasure, which charity doth breed, altogether pure, grateful to the mind, and increasing by reflection; never perishing or decaying; a man eternally enjoying the good he hath done, by remembering and ruminating thereon. In fine,

XX. Whereas the great obstacle to charity is self-love, or an extravagant fondness of our own interests, yet uncharitableness destroyeth that: for



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how can we love ourselves, if we do want charity ?  
how can we appear lovely to ourselves, if we are destitute of so worthy an endowment ? or if we can discern those unworthy dispositions, which accompany the defect of it, can we esteem so mean, so vile, so ugly things as we then are ? Aristotle saith, that bad men cannot be friends to themselves, *Because having in themselves nothing amiable, they can feel no affection toward themselves*<sup>d</sup>; and certainly, if we are not stark blind, or can but see wrath, spite, envy, revenge in their own black and ugly hue, we must needs (if they do possess our souls) grow odious and despicable to ourselves. And being they do rob us of so many great benefits, and bring so many grievous mischiefs on us, we cannot be otherwise than enemies to ourselves, by cherishing them, or suffering them to lodge in us.

These are some very considerable inducements to the practice of this great virtue ; there are divers others of a higher nature, derivable from the inmost bowels of our Religion, grounded on its peculiar constitution and obligations, which I shall now forbear to mention, reserving them for a particular discourse by themselves.

Quinquag.  
Sund.

*O Lord, who hast taught us, that all our doings without charity are nothing worth ; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake.*

<sup>d</sup> Οὐθὲν φιλητὸν ἔχοντες, οὐθὲν φιλικὸν πάσχουσι πρὸς ἑαυτούς.—  
Arist. Eth. ix. 4. [9.]

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## SERMON XXXI.

### OF A PEACEABLE TEMPER AND CARRIAGE.

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ROMANS XII. 18.

*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably  
with all men.*

THIS chapter containeth many excellent precepts SERM.  
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and wholesome advices, (scarce any portion of  
holy scripture so many in so little compass). From  
among them I have selected one, alas but too sea-  
sonable and pertinent to the unhappy condition of  
our distracted age, wherein to observe this and such  
like injunctions, is by many esteemed an impossibi-  
lity, by others a wonder, by some a crime. It hath  
an apt coherence with, yet no necessary dependence  
upon, the parts adjoining : whence I may presume  
to treat upon it distinctly by itself : and without  
further preface or circumstance we may consider  
several particulars therein.

I. And first, concerning the advice itself, or  
the substance of the duty charged on us, *Εἰρηνεύειν*,  
*To be in peace*, or *live peaceably*, we may take  
notice, that whether, according to the more usual  
acception, it be applied to the public estate of  
things, or, as here, doth relate only to private con-  
versation, it doth import,

I Not barely a negation of doing, or suffering  
harm, or an abstinence from strife and violence,

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(for a mere strangeness this may be, a want of occasion, or a truce, rather than a peace,) but a positive amity, and disposition to perform such kind offices, without which good correspondence among men cannot subsist. For they who by reason of distance of place, non-acquaintance, or defect of opportunity, maintain no intercourse, cannot properly be said to be in peace with one another: but those who have frequent occasion of commerce, whose conditions require interchanges of courtesy and relief, who are some way obliged and disposed to afford needful succour, and safe retreat to each other; these may be said to live in peace together, and these only, it being in a manner impossible, that they who are not disposed to do good to others (if they have power and opportunity) should long abstain from doing harm.

2 Living peaceably implies not some few transitory performances, proceeding from casual humour, or the like; but a constant, stable, and well-settled condition of being; a continual cessation from injury, and promptitude to do good offices. For as one blow doth not make a battle, nor one skirmish a war; so cannot single forbearances from doing mischief, or some few particular acts of kindness, (such as mere strangers may afford each other,) be worthily styled a being in peace; but an habitual inclination to these, a firm and durable estate of innocence and beneficence.

3 Living in peace supposes a reciprocal condition of being: not only a performing good, and forbearing to do bad offices, but a receiving the like treatment from others. For he, that being assaulted is constrained to stand upon his defence, may not

be said to be in peace, though his not being so (involuntarily) is not to be imputed to him.

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4 Being in peace imports not only an outward cessation of violence and seeming demonstration of amity, but an inward will and resolution to continue therein. For he that intends, when occasion is presented, to do mischief to another, is nevertheless an enemy, because more secret and dangerous : an ambuscado is no less a piece of war, than confronting the enemy in open field. Proclaiming and denouncing signify, but good and ill intention constitute, and are the souls of peace and war. From these considerations we may infer a description of being in peace, viz. that it is, to bear mutual good-will, to continue in amity, to maintain good correspondence, to be upon terms of mutual courtesy and benevolence ; to be disposed to perform reciprocally all offices of humanity ; assistance in need, comfort in sorrow, relief in distress ; to please and satisfy one another, by advancing the innocent delight, and promoting the just advantage of each other ; to converse with confidence and security, without suspicion, on either hand, of any fraudulent, malicious, or hurtful practices against either : or, negatively, not to be in a state of enmity, personal hatred, pertinacious anger, jealousy, envy, or ill-will ; not to be apt to provoke, to reproach, to harm or hinder another, nor to have reasonable grounds of expecting the same bad usage from others ; to be removed from danger of vexatious quarrels, intercourse of odious language, offending others, or being disquieted one's self. This I take to be the meaning of living or being in peace, differing only in degree of obligation, and latitude

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of object, from the state of friendship properly so called, and opposed to a condition of enmity, defiance, contention, hatred, suspicion, animosity.

II. In the next place, we may consider the object of this duty, signified in those words, *With all men*. We often meet in scripture with exhortations directed peculiarly to Christians, to be at peace among themselves; as our Saviour lays this injunction upon his disciples, *Have peace one with another*, εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἀλλήλοις; inculcated by St Paul upon the Thessalonians in the same words: and the like we have in the second Epistle to Timothy, *Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart*: and to the Romans, *Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another*. But here the duty hath a more large and comprehensive object; *All men*, πάντες ἄνθρωποι: as likewise it hath in the Epistle to the Hebrews, *Pursue peace with all men*: with all men, without any exception, with men of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians; of all sects and religions; persecuting Jews and idolatrous heathens; (for of such consisted the generality of men at that time;) and so St Paul expressly in a like advice, *Give no offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God; even as I please all men*. And I may add, by evident parity of reason, with men of all degrees and estates, high and low, noble and base, rich and poor; of all tempers and dispositions, meek and angry, gentle and froward, pliable and perverse; of all endowments, wise and foolish, virtuous and vicious; of all judgments and persuasions, orthodox and heretical,

Mark ix.

50.

1 Thess. v.  
13.

2 Tim. ii.  
22.

Rom. xiv.

19.

Eph. iv. 3.

Heb. xii.  
14.

1 Cor. x.  
32, 33.

peaceable and schismatical persons: this universally  
vast and boundless term, all men, contains them  
all. Neither is there any evading our obligation  
to this duty, by pretending about others, that they  
differ from us in humour and complexion of soul,  
that they entertain opinions irreconcilably contrary  
to ours; that they adhere to sects and parties which  
we dislike and disavow; that they are not so  
virtuous, so religious, so holy as they should be, or  
at least not in such a manner as we would have  
them: for be this allegation true or false, it will  
not excuse us; while they are not divested of  
human nature, and can truly lay claim to the name  
and title of men, we are, by virtue of this precept,  
obliged to live peaceably with them.

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III. We may consider the qualification of the  
duty here expressed, and what those words mean;  
*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you.* To which  
purpose we may advert, from our description of  
living peaceably, that it consists mainly of two parts:  
one active, or proceeding from us, and terminated  
on others—to bear good-will, to do good offices, to  
procure the profit, delight, and welfare, to abstain  
from the displeasure, damage, and disturbance of  
others: the other passive, issuing from others, and  
terminated on ourselves—that they be well affected  
toward us, inclinable to do us good, and nowise dis-  
posed to wish, design, or bring any harm, trouble, or  
vexation upon us. Whereof the former is altogether  
in our power, consisting of acts or omissions depend-  
ing upon our free choice and counsel: and we are  
directly obliged to it by virtue of those words, *As  
much as lieth in you*, τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν: the latter is not  
fully so, yet commonly there be probable means of

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effecting it, which we are hence bound to use, though sometimes they may fail of success. For the words, *If it be possible*, *εἰ δυνατόν*, as they signify the utmost endeavour is to be employed, and that no difficulty (beneath the degree of impossibility) can discharge us from it; so they intimate plainly, that sometime our labour may be lost, and our purpose defeated; and that by the default of others it may be impossible we should arrive to a peaceable condition of life with all men. However, by this rule we are directed not only ourselves not to infringe the terms of peace toward others, but to endeavour earnestly, by all honest and prudent means, to obtain the good-will, favour, and respect of others, by which they may be disposed to all friendly correspondence with us, and not to disturb the quiet and tranquillity of our lives.

Having thus, by way of explication, superficially glanced upon the words, we will proceed to a more large and punctual review of them; and shall consider more distinctly the particulars grossly mentioned: and,

I. What those especial duties are, included in this more comprehensive one of living peaceably with all men; both those, which are directly required of us, as the necessary causes or immediate results of a peaceable disposition in us toward others; and also those, which are to be performed by us, as just and reasonable means conducive to beget or preserve in others a peaceable inclination toward us: these I shall consider promiscuously: and,

I We are, by this precept, directly obliged heartily to love, that is, to bear good-will to, to wish well to, to rejoice in the welfare, and com-

miserate the adversities of all men: at least not to hate, or bear ill-will to, to desire or design the harm, to repine at the happy success, or delight in the misfortunes of any: for as it is very hard to maintain peace and amicable correspondence with those we do not truly love; so it is absolutely impossible to do it long with those we hate: this satanic passion (or disposition of soul) always prompting the mind possessed therewith, to the contrivance and execution of mischief; whence he that hates his brother is said to be a murderer, as 1 John iii. 15. having in him that bitter root, from whence, if power and occasion conspire, will probably spring that most extreme of outrages, and capital breach of peace. Love is the only sure cement, that knits and combines men in friendly society; and hatred, the certain fountain of that violence, which rends and dissolves it. We cannot easily hurt or strive with those we love and wish well to: we cannot possibly long agree with those we hate and malign. Peace without love can be esteemed little more than politic dissimulation; and peace with hatred is really nothing less than an artificial disguise, or an insidious covert of enmity.

2 We are hence obliged to perform all kind offices of humanity, which the condition of any man can require, and may by us be performed, without considerable inconvenience or detriment to ourselves or others. When, for the preservation or comfortable accommodation of life, they need our help or our advice, we are readily to afford them; when they are in want or distress, we are to administer to them what comfort and relief we can. We are, upon this very score, to obey that injunction of St Paul to

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Gal. vi. 10.

the Galatians, *As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men.* For without this beneficence, a man's carriage (though otherwise harmless and inoffensive) appears rather a suspicious strangeness, than a peaceable demeanour, and naturally produces an enmity in those that are concerned in it. For he to whom, being pressed with necessity, requisite assistance is denied, will infallibly be apt to think himself not only neglected and disesteemed, but affronted also and injured; (need, in the general conceit of men, and especially of those that feel it, begetteth a kind of title to some competent relief;) and consequently will heinously resent, and complain bitterly of such supposed wrong, and, if ever he become able, repay it with advantage. And much more are we upon the same account not to perform ill offices toward any man; not to disturb him in the enjoyment of his innocent pleasure, nor to hinder him in the advancing his lawful profit, nor to interrupt him in the prosecution of his reasonable designs; nor anywise to vex and grieve him needlessly; and (above all) not to detain him in, nor to aggravate his affliction. For these are actual violations of peace, and impediments of good correspondence among men. Further,

3 In this duty of living peaceably is included an obligation to all kind of just and honest dealing with all men; punctually to observe contracts, impartially to decide controversies, equally to distribute rewards, to injure no man either in his estate, by violent or fraudulent encroachments upon his just possessions; or in his reputation, by raising or dispersing slanderous reports concerning him: for these courses of all others are most destructive to peace,

and upon the pretence of them most quarrels that  
ever were have been commenced.

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Justice in its own nature is, and by the common agreement of men hath been designed the guardian of peace and sovereign remedy of contention. But not to insist long upon such obvious subjects,

4 It much conduceth to the preservation of peace, and upholding amicable correspondence in our dealings and transactions with men, liable to doubt and debate, not to insist upon nice and rigorous points of right, not to take all advantage offered us, not to deal hard measure, not to use extremities, to the damage or hinderance of others, especially when no comparable benefit will thence accrue to ourselves. For such proceedings, as they discover in us little kindness to, or tenderness of our neighbour's good, so they exceedingly exasperate them, and persuade them we are their enemies, and render them ours, and so utterly destroy peace between us. Whenas abating something from the height and strictness of our pretences, and a favourable recession in such cases will greatly engage men to have an honourable opinion, and a peaceable affection toward us.

5 If we would attain to this peaceable estate of life, we must use toward all men such demonstrations of respect and courtesy, which, according to their degree and station, custom doth entitle them to, or which, upon the common score of humanity, they may be reasonably deemed to expect from us; respective gestures, civil salutations, free access, affable demeanour, cheerful looks, and courteous discourse. These, as they betoken good-will in

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them that use them, so they beget, cherish, and increase it in those, whom they refer to: and the necessary fruit of mutual good-will is peace. But the contrary carriages, contemptuous or disregardful behaviour, difficulty of admission to converse, a tetrical or sullen aspect, rough and fastidious language, as they discover a mind averse from friendly commerce, so they beget a more potent disdain in others: men generally (especially those of generous and hearty temper) valuing their due respect beyond all other interests, and more contentedly brooking injury than neglect. Whence this skill and dexterity of deportment (though immediately, and in its own nature of no great worth, and regulating actions of small importance, gestures, looks, and forms of speech,) yet because it is a nurse of peace, and greatly contributes to the delightfulness of society, hath been always much commended, and hath obtained a conspicuous place in the honourable rank of virtues, under the titles of courtesy, comity, and affability; and the opposites thereto, rudeness and rusticity, have been deservedly counted and called vices in morality.

6 This precept directly prohibits the use of all reproachful, scornful, and provoking language; these being the immediate results of enmity, and actual breaches of peace. Whence St Paul conjoins, *Μηδένα βλασφημεῖν*, and *ἀμάχους εἶναι*, *To speak evil of no man, to be no quarrellers, (or fighters,) but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.* For war is managed (and that with more deadly animosity) with the tongue, as well as with the hand. *There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword*, saith Solomon; and, *Whose teeth are spears and arrows*,

Prov. xii.  
18.

Psal. lvii.  
4; lxiv. 3.

*and their tongue a sharp sword*, saith David. Words are with more anguish felt than blows; their wounds are more incurable, and they leave a deeper scar<sup>a</sup>. Men usually dread more the loss of their honour than their lives, and take more grievously the ravishing of their credit than the depredation of their estate. Living peaceably therefore implies as much abstaining from opprobrious words as injurious actions; yea more; for reviling is not only a violation of peace, but a dishonourable waging of war; like shooting arrows dipt in poison, and discharging slugs against our neighbour's reputation<sup>b</sup>: practices condemned by all as base and inhuman, and contrary to the laws of a noble warfare; being arguments, we affect rather our adversary's utter ruin, than a gallant victory over him. There be fair ways of disputing our cause, without contumelious reflections upon persons; and the errors of men may be sufficiently refuted, without satirical virulency. One good reason modestly propounded hath in it naturally more power and efficacy to convince him that is in a mistake, or to confound him with shame that is guilty of a fault, than ten thousand scoffs and ignominious taunts<sup>c</sup>. When we are to express

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<sup>a</sup> Ποταπὸν δὲ χρήμα λαιδορία; ὡς θυμοδακὲς ἀληθῶς, καὶ ἀμύττον ψυχὴν μᾶλλον ἢ σιδηρὸς χρῶτα.—Jul. Imp. Orat. II. [Opp. p. 178].

<sup>b</sup> Ζῆλος γὰρ συγγνώμης ἀπεστερημένος οὐ ζῆλος, ἀλλὰ θυμὸς μᾶλλον ἐστίν, καὶ νοθεσία φιλανθρωπίαν οὐκ ἔχουσα, βασκανία τις εἶναι δοκεῖ.—Chrys. Orat. IX. [Opp. Tom. V. p. 32.]

<sup>c</sup> Vid. egregium Antonini locum, lib. XI. § 18. 9.

[Τί γὰρ σοι ποιήσει ὁ ὑβριστικώτατος, ἐὰν διατελῇς εὐμενὴς αὐτῷ, καὶ εἰ οὕτως ἔτυχε, πρῶτος παραινῇς καὶ μεταδιδάσκης εὐσχολῶν παρ' αὐτὸν ἐκείνον τὸν καιρὸν, ὅτε κακὰ ποιεῖν σε ἐπιχειρεῖ; μὴ τέκνον· πρὸς ἄλλο πεφύκαμεν. ἐγὼ μὲν οὐ μὴ βλαβῶ, σὺ δὲ βλάβη, τέκνον. καὶ δεικνύναι εὐαφῶς καὶ ὀλικῶς, ὅτι τοῦτο οὕτως ἔχει, ὅτι οὐδὲ μέλισσαι αὐτὸ ποιοῦσιν, οὐδ' ὅσα συναγελαστικά πέφυκε· δεῖ δὲ μήτε εἰρωνικῶς αὐτὸ ποιεῖν, μήτε ὀνειδιστικῶς, ἀλλὰ φιλοστοργῶς καὶ ἀδῆκτως τῇ ψυχῇ.]

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those deeds of nature, (the performance of which is concealed, as containing in it something of supposed turpitude,) we are wont to veil them in such modest circumlocutions, that by the hearers, without offence to their bashfulness, may sufficiently be understood. So when it is needful or expedient to confute the opinions, or reprove the actions of men, if we either charitably design their amendment, or desire to maintain peaceable correspondence with them, it behoves, that we do not, by using the most broad and distasteful language, immoderately trespass upon their modesty and patience; that (to use Seneca's<sup>d</sup> phrase) we do, *Agere curam, non tantum salutis, sed etiam honestæ cicatricis*, *Have a care not only to cure the wound, but to leave a comely scar*, and not to deform him, whom we endeavour to reform; for no sore is the easilier cured for being roughly handled, and least of all those in manners and opinion. A soft hand, and a tender heart, and a gentle tongue, are most convenient qualities of a spiritual surgeon. But further to this purpose.

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7 If we desire to live peaceably with all men, we are to be equal in censuring men's actions, candid in interpreting their meanings, mild in reprehending, and sparing to relate their miscarriages, to derive their actions from the best principles, (from which in the judgment of charity they may be supposed to proceed, as from casual mistake rather than from wilful prejudice, from human infirmity rather than from malicious design,) to construe ambiguous expressions to the most favourable sense they may admit; not to condemn men's practices without distinct knowledge of the case,

<sup>d</sup> De Clem. i. 17. [2.]

and examining the reasons, which possibly may  
absolve or excuse them: to extenuate their acknow-  
ledged faults by such circumstances as aptly serve  
that purpose, and not to exaggerate them by strained  
consequences, or uncertain conjectures: to rebuke  
them (if need be) so as they may perceive we sin-  
cerely pity their errors, and tender their good, and  
wish nothing more than their recovery, and do not  
design to upbraid, deride, or insult over them, being  
fallen; and finally, not to recount their misdeeds  
over frequently, unseasonably, and with compla-  
cence. He that thus demeaneth himself, manifestly  
sheweth himself to prize his neighbour's good-will,  
and to be desirous to continue in amity with him;  
and assuredly obliges him to be in the same manner  
affected toward him. But he that is rigidly severe  
and censorious in his judgments, blaming in them  
things indifferent, condemning actions allowable,  
detracting from qualities commendable, deducing  
men's doings from the worst causes, and imputing  
them to the worst ends, and representing them  
under the most odious appellations; that calls all  
impositions of superiors which he dislikes, tyranny,  
and all manners of divine worship that suit not to  
his fancy, superstition, and all pretences to con-  
science in those that dissent from him, hypocrisy,  
and all opinions different from his, heresy; that is  
suspicious of ill intention without sufficient ground,  
and prejudicates men's meanings before he well  
apprehends them, and captiously perverts sayings  
capable of good construction; that is curiously in-  
quisitive into his neighbour's life, and gladly  
observes failings therein, and upon all occasions  
recites stories to his disgrace and disadvantage;

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PROV. xvii.

9.

PROV. xvii.

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that flies, like a vulture, to carrion only<sup>o</sup>; that is immoderately bitter, fierce, and vehement in accusing and inveighing against others, painting such, as he assumes to impugn, with the blackest colours, in the most horrid shape and ugly dress, converting all matter of discourse (though never so unseasonably and impertinently) into declamation, and therein copiously expatiating: in fine, employing his utmost might of wit and eloquence and confidence in rendering that to others as hateful as he signifies they are to himself: such men, what do they else but loudly proclaim, that they despise their neighbour's good-will, purposely provoke his anger, and defy his utmost enmity? For it is impossible such dealing should not by them, who are therein concerned, be accounted extremely unjust, and to proceed from desperate hatred.

8 He that would effectually observe this apostolic rule, must be disposed to overlook such lesser faults committed against him, as make no great breach upon his interest or credit, yea to forget or forgive the greatest and most grievous injuries; to excuse the mistakes, and connive at the neglects, and bear patiently the hasty passions of his neighbour, and to embrace readily any seasonable overture, and accept any tolerable conditions of reconciliation<sup>f</sup>. For even in common life that

<sup>o</sup> Plut. de Capiend. ex Hostib. Utilit. [Καὶ καθάπερ οἱ γύπες ἐπὶ τὰς ὀσμὰς τῶν διεφθορότων σωμάτων φέρονται—οὕτω τὰ νοσοῦντα τοῦ βίου καὶ φαῦλα καὶ πεπονθότα κινεῖ τὸν ἐχθρὸν, καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα οἱ μισοῦντες ἄττουσι.—Opp. Tom. vi. p. 324. Ed. Reisk.]

<sup>f</sup> Vincit malos pertinax bonitas. Sen. Ben. vii. 31.

Νίκα ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν. Rom. xii. 21.

Irascitur aliquis? tu contra beneficiis provoca. Cadit statim simultas ab altera parte deserta: nisi pariter non pugnant. Si

observation of our Saviour most exactly holds, *It is impossible that offences should not come*; the air may sooner become wholly fixed, and the sea continue in a perfect rest without waves or undulations, than human conversation be altogether free from occasions of distaste, which he that cannot either prudently dissemble, or patiently digest, must renounce all hopes of living peaceably here. He that like tinder is inflammable by the least spark, and is enraged by every angry word, and resents deeply every petty affront, and cannot endure the memory of a past unkindness should upon any terms be defaced, resolves surely to live in eternal tumult and combustion, to multiply daily upon himself fresh quarrels, and to perpetuate all enmity already begun. Whenas, by total passing by those little causes of disgust, the present contention is altogether avoided, or instantly appeased, our neighbour's passion suddenly evaporates and consumes itself; no remarkable footsteps of dissension remain; our neighbour, reflecting upon what is past, sees himself obliged by our discreet forbearance, however all possible means are used to prevent trouble and preserve peace. To this purpose, *The discretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression*, saith Solomon: and, *He that covereth a transgression seeketh love*, saith the same wise prince. But further,

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Matt. xviii.  
7.  
Luke xvii.  
1.

Prov. xix.  
11.

Prov. xvii.  
9.

9 If we would live peaceably with all men, we must not over highly value ourselves, nor over eagerly pursue our own things. We must not admire our own endowments, nor insist upon our

utrimque certabitur, ira concurratur: ille est melior, qui prior pedem retulit: victus est qui vicit.—Sen. de Ira. II. 34. [5].



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Prov.  
xxviii. 25.  
xiii. 10.

deserts; for this will make us apt to depreciate others, and them to loathe us. We must not be over tender of our credit, and covetous of respect; for this will render us apt to take exceptions, and engage us in troublesome competitions for superiority of place, and pre-eminence in the vain opinions of men. *He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife:* and, *Only* (i. e. chiefly) *from pride cometh contention,* saith Solomon. We must not be much addicted to our own interests, for this will dispose us to encroach upon the concernments of others, and them to resist our attempts, whence conflict and enmity will necessarily arise. We must not prefer our own judgments, and imperiously obtrude them upon others; nor be pertinacious in persuading them to embrace our private opinions, nor violently urgent to a compliance with our humour. For these things are intolerably fastidious in conversation, and obnoxious to be charged with usurpation and iniquity; all men naturally challenging to themselves an equal, or at least a proportionable share of reason, together with the free conduct of their lives uncontrollable by private dictates. If therefore we desire to live quietly, and not needlessly to disoblige or displease others, we should be modest in esteeming our own abilities, and moderate in pursuing our own advantages, and in our converse not less complacent to others than we desire they should be to us; and as liberal in allowing leave to dissent from us, as we are bold in taking freedom to abound in our own sense. And if in debate a modest declaration of our opinion, and the reasons inducing us thereto, will not prevail, it behoves us to give over such a

successless combat, and to retire into the silent enjoyment of our own thoughts. From not observing which rule, discourse grows into contention, and contention improves into feud and enmity.

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10 If we would live peaceably, it concerns us to abstain from needless contests about matters of opinion, and questions either merely vain and frivolous, of little use or concernment; or over-nice and subtle, and thence indeterminable by reason; or that are agitated with extraordinary eagerness and heat of passion; or such as are already defined by general consent; or such upon the decision of which the public peace and safety do depend. There are some controversies prickly, like brambles, and apt to scratch those that handle them, but yielding no savoury or wholesome fruit: such as concern the consequences of imaginary suppositions, the state and circumstances of beings to us unknown, the right application of artificial terms, and the like impertinent matters; which serve to no other purpose but the exercise of curious wits, and exciting emulation among them. Others there be concerning matters of more weighty moment, yet having the resolution depending upon secrets unsearchable, or the interpretation of ambiguous words and obscure phrases, or upon some other uncertain conjectures; and are yet rendered more difficult by being entangled with inextricable folds of subtlety, nice distinctions, and crafty evasions, devised by the parties engaged in them for the maintenance of their causes respectively; whence it hath happened, though with immense care and diligence of both parts they have been long canvassed, that yet they do, and in all pro-

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bability will for ever, remain undecided<sup>s</sup>. So that now to engage in contest about them may be reasonably deemed nothing more than a wilful mis-pense of our time, labour, and good humour, by vainly reciprocating the saw of endless contention. Other questions there be in themselves of more easy resolution, and of considerable importance, which yet, by extreme opposition of parties, are so clouded and overgrown with insuperable prejudices, that the disputing them is seldom attended with other success, than an inflaming ourselves and others with passion. Others are by small and obscure parties managed against the common consent, and against the positive decrees of the most venerable authorities among men, by ventilating which, as truth is like to gain little, so peace is sure to suffer much. For as it is nowise a safe or advised course (except in case of necessary defence) to subject received opinions to the hazardous trial of a tumultuary conflict, their credit being better upheld by a stately reservedness, than by a popular forwardness of discourse; as buildings stand fastest that are never shaken, and those possessions remain most secure that are never called in question: so, on the other hand, to countenance new and uncouth paradoxes, as it argues too much arrogance and presumption in confronting our single apprehensions against the deliberate sense and suffrage of so many men, yea so many ages of men; and is likely to prove a successless attempt, like swimming against the current, accompanied with much toil and little progress, so it serves no good end, but only

<sup>s</sup> Non amplius inveniri licet, quam quod a Deo discitur.—Tertull. de Anim. Cap. II. [Opp. p. 266 A]

foments divisions, and disturbs both our private and the public peace. But most of all we are to be cautelous of meddling with controversies of dangerous consequence, wherein the public weal and quiet are concerned, which bare the roots of sacred authority, and prostitute the mysteries of government to vulgar inspection. Such points ought to be subjects of law, not of syllogism, and the errors in them to be corrected by punishment, rather than confuted by argument<sup>h</sup>: neither can it be thought reasonable, that the interest of public peace should depend upon the event of private disputation. It concerns us therefore, if we would live peaceably in such disputable matters, reserving all due reverence to the judgments of the most, the best and wisest persons, to be content in a modest privacy, to enjoy the results of a serious and impartial disquisition, patiently enduring others to dissent from us, and not attempting by needless, fruitless, and endless contentions, to gain others to our persuasions; especially since the truth contended for may not be worth the passion employed upon it, and the benefits of the victory not countervail the prejudices sustained in the combat. For goodness and virtue may often consist with ignorance and error, seldom with strife and discord. And this consideration I shall conclude with those exhortations of St Paul, *But foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and law-contests, decline; for they are unprofitable and vain.* And in the second Epistle to Timothy, *But foolish and unlearned questions avoid,*

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Tit. iii. 9.

2 Tim. ii.  
23, 25.

<sup>h</sup> Οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀποροῦντες, πότερον δεῖ τοὺς θεοὺς τιμᾶν, καὶ τοὺς γονεῖς ἀγαπᾶν, ἢ οὐ, κολάσεως δέονται· οἱ δὲ πότερον, ἢ χιῶν λευκή, ἢ οὐ, αἰσθήσεως.—Arist. Top. i. [9. 9.]

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2 Tim. ii.  
14.

*knowing that they gender strifes; and the servant of the Lord (that is, a minister of Religion) must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that are contrarily disposed. And in the same chapter, Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit, to the subverting of the hearers: of so pernicious consequence did St Paul esteem unnecessary wrangling and disputing to be. But further,*

II If we desire to live peaceably, we must restrain our pragmatical curiosity within the bounds of our proper business and concernment, not (being *Curiosi in aliena republica*<sup>1</sup>) invading other men's provinces, and without leave or commission intermeddling with their affairs<sup>k</sup>; not rushing into their closets, prying into their concealed designs, or dictating counsel to them without due invitation thereto; not controlling their actions, nor subjecting their proceedings to our censure, without competent authority. For these courses men usually look upon as rash intrusions, both injurious and reproachful to them, usurping upon that freedom of choice, which all men passionately affect to preserve entire to themselves, and arguing them of weakness and incapacity to manage their own business: neither do men more naturally drive away flies that buz about their ears, and molest them in their employments, than they with disdain repel such immodest and unseasonable meddlers in their

<sup>1</sup> [Cic. de Offic. 1. 34, 125.]

<sup>k</sup> According to St Paul's advice, 1 Thess. iv. 11. *Strive (or be ambitious) to be quiet, and to mind your own business.* Φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἡσυχάζειν, καὶ πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια.

affairs. *Let no man suffer*, saith St Peter, *as a busybody in other men's matters*: intimating, that those who are impertinently inquisitive into other men's matters make themselves liable to suffer (and that deservedly) for their fond curiosity and bold presumption. And, *He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears*, saith Solomon; that is, he catcheth at that which he cannot hold, and vainly aims at that which he cannot effect, and rashly irritates those which will turn upon him and bite him. If therefore we would neither molest others, nor be disquieted ourselves, we must be like natural agents, never working aught beyond our proper sphere of activity. But especially, if we desire to live peaceably, we must beware of assuming to ourselves a liberty to censure the designs, decrees, or transactions of public authority, and of saying to our superiors, *What doest thou?* and much more, by querulous murmurings or clamorous declamations, of bringing envy and odium upon them. Few private men are capable of judging aright concerning those things, as being placed beneath in a valley, and wanting a due prospect upon the ground and causes of their proceedings, who by reason of their eminent station can see more and further than they; and therefore are incompetent judges, and unjustly presume to interpose their sentence in such cases. But suppose the actions of superiors notoriously blameable and scandalous, and that by infallible arguments we are persuaded thereof; yet seeing neither the taxing of, nor complaint against them doth in anywise regularly belong to us, nor the discovery of our mind therein

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1 Pet. iv.  
15.

Prov. xxvi.

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can probably be an efficacious means of procuring redress, and immediately tends to diminish the reputation and weaken the affection due to government, and consequently to impair the peaceable estate of things which by them is sustained, we are wholly to abstain from such unwarrantable, unprofitable, and turbulent practices; and with a submissive and discreet silence, passing over the miscarriages of our superiors, to wait patiently upon the providence, and implore the assistance of him, who is the only competent Judge of such, and sovereign Disposer of all things, who hath their hearts in his hands, and fashioneth them as he thinks good. Further,

PROV. xxi.  
1, 2.

12 If we would live peaceably with all men, it behoves us not to engage ourselves so deeply in any singular friendship, or in devotion to any one party of men, as to be entirely partial to their interests, and prejudiced in their behalf, without distinct consideration of the truth and equity of their pretences, in the particular matters of difference; not to approve, favour, or applaud that which is bad in some; to dislike, discountenance, or disparage that which is good in others; not, out of excessive kindness to some, to give just cause of distaste to others: not, for the sake of a fortuitous agreement in disposition, opinion, interest, or relation, to violate the duties of justice or humanity. For he that upon such terms is a friend to any one man, or party of men, as to be resolved, with an implicit faith, or blind obedience, to maintain whatever he or they shall affirm to be true, and whatever they shall do to be good, doth in a manner undertake enmity against all men beside, and as it may happen, doth oblige

himself to contradict plain truth, to deviate from the rules of virtue, and to offend Almighty God himself. This unlimited partiality we owe only to truth and goodness, and to God, (the fountain of them,) in no case to swerve from their dictates and prescriptions. He that followed Tiberius Gracchus in his seditious practices, upon the bare account of friendship, and alleged in his excuse, that, if his friend had required it of him, he should as readily have put fire to the Capitol<sup>1</sup>, was much more abominable for his disloyalty to his country, and horrible impiety against God, than commendable for his constant fidelity to his friend. And that soldier which is said to have told Cæsar<sup>m</sup>, (in his first expedition against Rome,) that in obedience to his commands he would not refuse to sheathe his sword in the breast of his brother, or in the throat of his aged father, or in the bowels of his pregnant wife, was for his unnatural barbarity rather to be abhorred, than to be esteemed for his loyal affection to his general. And in like manner, he that, to please or gratify the humour of his friend, can be either injurious, or treacherous, or notably discourteous to any man else, is very blameable, and renders himself deservedly odious to all others. Lælius, who incomparably well both understood and practised the rules of friendship, is by Cicero

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<sup>1</sup> Cic. de Amicit. [xi. 37. C. Blossius—hanc, ut sibi ignoscerem, causam afferebat, quod tanti Ti. Gracchum fecisset, ut, quidquid ille vellet, sibi faciendum putaret. Tum ego, Etiamne, si te in Capitolium faces ferre vellet? Nunquam, inquit, voluisset id quidem. Sed, si voluisset? Paruissem.]

<sup>m</sup> [Pectore si fratris gladium, juguloque parentis  
Condere me jubeas, plenæque in viscera partu  
Conjugis, invita peragam tamen omnia dextra.]

Luc. i. [376.]



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reported to have made this the first and chief law thereof; *Ut neque rogemus res turpes, nec faciamus rogati: That we neither require of our friends the performance of base and naughty things; nor, being requested of them, perform such ourselves<sup>n</sup>.* And in the heraldry, or comparison of duties, as all others must give place to those of piety, verity, and virtue, so, after them, the duties of humanity justly challenge the next place of respect, even above those which belong to the highest degree of friendship, (due to our nearest relations, yea to our country itself,) precisely taken, abstracted and distinguished from those of humanity. For the world is in nature the first, the most comprehensive and dearest country of us all; and our general obligations to mankind are more ancient, more fundamental, and more indispensable, than those particular ones superadded to, or superstructed on them. The peace therefore of the world, and the general welfare of men its citizens, ought to be more dear to us, and the means conducing thereto more carefully regarded by us in our actions, than either the love, favour, or satisfaction of any particular persons is to be valued or pursued. And the not observing this rule may reasonably be esteemed to have a great influence upon the continuance of those implacable feuds and dissensions, wherewith the world is so miserably torn and shattered. Men's being peremptorily resolved to extol, countenance, or excuse promiscuously all the principles and proceedings of the party to which they have addicted themselves, and to see no error, fault, or abuse in them; but by all means to depress, vilify, and condemn (if not to reproach,

<sup>n</sup> Ubi supra [xii. 40.]

calumniate, and persecute) the opinions and practices of others, and not to acknowledge in them any thing considerably good or commendable ; whence commonly all apprehend their adversaries extremely unjust and disingenuous towards them, and are alienated from all thoughts (or however discouraged from all hopes) of friendly accommodation and reconciliation. But he, that would live peaceably with all men, must be free in his judgment, impartial in his dealing, and ingenuous in his carriage toward all: not, *Θαυμάζων πρόσωπα*, *Admiring* or *wondering at some men*, (as if they were impeccable or infallible,) nor, *Having the truth in respect of persons*, abetting in his friends only what is just and true, allowing the same in others, but in neither, by single approbation, countenancing any thing false or evil ; for so demeaning himself, he giveth no man just occasion of displeasure or enmity against him.

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Jude 16.

James ii.

1.

13 If we would live peaceably ourselves, we should endeavour to preserve peace, and prevent differences, and reconcile dissensions among others, by doing good offices, and making fair representations of intercurrent passages between them ; by concealing causes of future disgust, and removing present misunderstandings, and excusing past mistakes ; by allaying their passions, and rightly informing their minds, by friendly intercessions, and pacific advices. For the fire that devoureth our neighbour's house threateneth and endangereth ours ; and it is hard to approach contention, without being engaged therein. 'Tis not easy to keep ourselves indifferent or neutral ; and doing so we shall, in likelihood, be maligned and persecuted by both the contending parties. *Blessed are the peacemakers*, Matt. v. 9.

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Prov. xii.  
20.

Prov. xvi.  
28.

Prov. xvii.  
14; xxv. 8.

saith our Saviour, *for they shall be called the sons of God*; that is, they shall be highly esteemed and revered for this divine quality, wherein they so nearly resemble the God of peace, and his blessed Son the great Mediator. But further, without respect to other recompense, and from the nature of their employment, such are immediately happy, and in this their virtuous practice rewards itself, that by appeasing others' quarrels, they save themselves that tranquillity which they procure to others. But those informing sycophants, those internuncios of pestilent tales, and incendiaries of discord, that (from bad nature, or upon base design) by the still breath of clandestine whispers, or by the more violent blasts of impudent calumnies, kindle the flames of dissension, or foment them among others; that, by disseminating infamous rumours, and by malicious suggestions, instil jealousies into, and nourish malevolent surmises in the minds of men, *Separating*, as it is in the Proverbs, *between chief friends*, and widening the distance between others: these, I say, from the seeds of variance they scatter among others, reap in the end mischief and disturbance to themselves; nor can expect to enjoy the benefit of that quiet, which they labour to deprive others of. *The beginning of strife*, saith Solomon, *is as when one letteth out water*; and he that, to the intent his neighbour's lands should be overflown with a torrent of dissension, doth unloose the dams, and cut the banks of former friendship, may (if he be wise) expect the merciless flood should at length reach himself, and that his own habitation should be at last surrounded therewith. For when men at length begin to be weary, and to repent of their

needless quarrels, and the mischievous consequences attending them, and to be inquisitive into the causes and instruments of their vexation, they will certainly find out, detest, and invert the edge of their displeasure upon these wretched makebates ; and so the poison they mingled for others they themselves drink up ; the catastrophe of the tragedy (begun by them) is acted upon themselves ; they sink down into the pit they made for others, and in the net which they hid is their own foot taken : *Et delator habet, quod dabat, exilium*°.

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Lastly, If we would effectually observe this precept, we must readily comply with the innocent customs, and obey the established laws of the places where we live. I say first comply with the customs ; which also are, in effect, inferior laws enacted by the tacit agreement of the generality of men ; the non-observation of which is upon many accounts very prejudicial to peaceable life. For to those concerned in it, it will always seem to intimate a squeamish niceness, a froward perverseness, an arrogant self-conceitedness, a manifest despising other men's judgments, and a virtual condemning their practices of fault or folly, and consequently a monopolizing all goodness, and appropriating all wisdom to himself ; qualities intolerably odious to men, and productive of enmity. It incenses the people (hugely susceptible of provocation) with a sense of notable injury done, and contempt cast upon it. For the only authority, which the commonalty can lay claim to, consists in prescribing rules of decency in language, habit, gesture, ceremony, and other circumstances of action, declared

° [Mart. de Spect. iv. 4.]

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and ratified by ordinary practice ; nonconformity to which is by them adjudged a marvellous irregularity, contumacy, and rebellion against the majesty of the people, and is infallibly revenged and punished by them.

There is no preserving peace, nor preventing broils and stirs, but by punctually observing that ordinary rule of equity, that in cases of doubtful debate, and points of controverted practice, the fewest should yield to the most, the weakest bend to the strongest, and that to the greatest number should be allowed at least the greatest appearance of reason. To which purpose we may observe, that the best and wisest men (not to displease those with whom they conversed, as far as their duty to God, and their conscience would permit) have commonly, in their manners of life, followed not what in their retired judgment they most approved, but what suited to the customs of their times and places, avoiding a morose singularity, as offensive to others, and productive of disquiet to themselves<sup>p</sup>. You know how Cicero censured Cato for endeavouring, against the grain and predominant genius of those times, to reduce things to a strict agreement with his private notions : *Ille optimo animo utens, et summa fide, nocet interdum reipublicæ. Dicit enim tanquam in Platonis πολιτεία, non tanquam in Romuli fœce, sententiam*<sup>q</sup>. But a more clear and pertinent instance we have in St Paul, who thus

<sup>p</sup> Id agamus, ut meliorem vitam sequamur quam vulgus, non ut contrariam ; alioqui quos emendari volumus, fugamus, et a nobis avertimus.

Temperetur vita inter bonos mores et publicos, &c. Sen. [Ep. v. § 2, § 4.]

<sup>q</sup> Ep. ad Attic. ii. 1.

represents his own practice : *I have made myself a servant to all : unto the Jews I became as a Jew ; to them that are without law, as without law : to the weak became I as weak : I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.* St Paul wisely knew, that, by a prudent compliance with men's customs, and condescension to their capacities, he engaged to him, or at least did not alienate from him, their affections ; and thereby became more capable of infusing good doctrine into their minds, and promoting their spiritual good. And the same course was generally taken by the primitive Christians, who in all things (not inconsistent with the rules and principles of their religion) did industriously conform their conversation to the usual practices of men ; thereby shunning those scandalous imputations of pride and perverseness, which then rendered the Jews so odious to the world, as appears by divers passages in the ancient apologists for Christian religion : particularly Justin Martyr in his Epistle to Diognetus hath these words : *Χριστιανοὶ γὰρ οὔτε γῆ, οὔτε φωνῇ, οὔτε ἔθελαι διακεκριμένοι τῶν λοιπῶν εἰσὶν ἀνθρώπων. οὔτε γάρ ποὺ πόλεις ἰδίας κατοικοῦσιν, οὔτε διαλέκτῳ τινὶ παρηλλαγμένη χρῶνται, οὔτε βίον παράσημον ἀσκοῦσιν.—κατοικοῦντες δὲ πόλεις Ἑλληνικάς τε καὶ βαρβάρους, ὡς ἕκαστος ἐκκληρώθη, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις ἔθελαι ἀκολουθοῦντες<sup>r</sup>, &c.* *The Christians neither in dwelling, language, or customs differ from the rest of men ; they neither inhabit towns proper to themselves, nor use any peculiar dialect, nor exercise an uncouth manner of living ; but, as by chance it is allotted to them, inhabiting cities belonging both to Greeks and*

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1 Cor. ix.  
19, 20, 21,  
22 ; x. 33.

Acts xxi.  
18—26.

<sup>r</sup> [Cap. v. Opp. p. 248 c.]

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*Barbarians, comply with the customs of the country.*

And much more hath he there ; and much Tertulian likewise in his Apologetic, to the same purpose. Neither do we find in the life of our Saviour, that exact pattern of wisdom and goodness, that in any thing he did affect to differ from the received customs of his time and country, except such as were grounded upon vain conceits, extremely prejudicial to piety, or directly repugnant thereto.

Rom. xiv.  
19.

And I cannot except from this rule the compliance with religious customs used in the worship and service of God : since a wilful discrepancy from them doth much more destroy peace, and kindle the flame of contention, inasmuch as men are apt to apprehend themselves much more slighted and more condemned by a disagreement in those, than in matters of lesser concernment. And it cannot reasonably be imagined, that the God of love and peace, who questionless delights to see men converse in peace and amity, and who therefore in general terms enjoins us to pursue the things that make for peace, (whereof certainly in reason and to experience, following indifferent and harmless customs, not expressly repugnant to his law, nor to the dictates of natural reason, is one thing, and not the least,) in our addresses to himself (partly designed and mainly serving more strictly to unite, not to dissociate men in affection) should dislike or disapprove the use of this course, so expedient and conducive to peace : especially since he infinitely more regards the substance of the duty, and the devotion of the heart therein, than the manner, or any circumstantial appendages thereof: it is certain however, that St Paul intimates a

wilful departure from ordinary practice in such cases, to proceed from a contentious disposition: SERM.  
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*But if any man, saith he, have a mind to be contentious,* (so *δοκεῖ φιλόνεικος εἶναι* imports,) *we have no such custom, nor the churches of God.* 1 Cor. xi.  
16.

But yet much more is peaceable conversation impeached by disobedience to established laws, those great bulwarks of society, fences of order, and supports of peace: which he that refuses to obey, is so far from living peaceably with all men, that he may reasonably be presumed unwilling to have peace with any man; since in a manner he defies all mankind, vilifies its most solemn judgments, endeavours to dissolve those sacred bands by which its union is contained, and to subvert the only foundations of public tranquillity. He declares himself either to affect an universal tyranny over, or an abhorrency from society with other men, to be unwilling to live with them upon equal terms, or to submit to any fair arbitration, to desire that strifes should be endless, and controversies never decided, who declines the verdict of law, the most solemn issue of deliberate advice, proceeding from the most honourable, most wise, most worthy and select persons, and involving in it the consent of the whole commonwealth. St Paul, directing that prayers should be made for princes and those in authority, assigns the reason, *That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty:* 1 Tim. ii.  
2. and certainly if we are to pray for, we are also obliged to obey them, in order to the same end, which to do is absolutely in our power, and more immediately requisite to that purpose. For as no peace can be preserved without the influence of au-



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thority; so no authority can subsist without obedience to its sanctions. He that is desirous to enjoy the privileges of this happy estate of peace, must in reason be content to perform the duties enjoined, and bear the common burdens imposed by those who are the protectors of it.

Thus, as plainly as I could, have I described what it is to live peaceably, and what the means are that principally conduce thereto : I should now proceed to consider the object of the duty, and the reasons why it respects all men ; as also whence it comes, that sometimes we may fail in our endeavour of attaining this desirable condition : and lastly, to propound some inducements persuasive of its practice. But I must not further encroach on your patience, and shall therefore reserve these things to the next opportunity.

*Now the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord ; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.*

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## SERMON XXXII.

### OF A PEACEABLE TEMPER AND CARRIAGE.

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ROMANS XII. 18.

*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably  
with all men.*

I HAVE very lately considered what it is to live SERM.  
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peaceably, and what are the duties included  
therein ; and what means conduce thereto.

II. I proceed now to consider the object thereof, and why the duty of living peaceably extends to *All men*, that is, why we are bound to bear good will, and do good offices, and shew civil respects to all men ; and to endeavour, that all men reciprocally be well affected toward us. For it might with some colour of reason be objected, and said, Why should I be obliged heartily to love those, that desperately hate me ; to treat them kindly, that use me despitefully ; to help them, that would hinder me ; to relieve them, that would plunge me into utter distress ; to comfort them, that delight in my affliction ; to be respective to, and tender of, their reputation, who despise, defame, and reproach me ; to be indulgent and favourable to them, who are harsh and rigorous in their dealings with me ; to spare and pardon them, who with implacable malice persecute me ? Why should I seek their friendship, who disdainfully reject mine ? why prize their favour, who scorn mine ? why strive to please them,

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who purposely offend me? Or why should I have any regard to men, void of all faith, goodness, or desert? And most of all, why should I be bound to maintain amicable correspondence with those, who are professed enemies to piety and virtue, who oppugn truth, and disturb peace, and countenance vice, error, and faction? How can any love, consent of mind, or communion of good offices, intercede between persons so contrarily disposed? I answer, they may, and ought, and that because the obligation to these ordinary performances is not grounded upon any peculiar respects, special qualifications, or singular actions of men, (which are contingent and variable,) but upon the indefectible score of common humanity. We owe them, (as the philosopher alleged, when he dispensed his alms to an unworthy person,) Οὐ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, ἀλλὰ τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ<sup>a</sup>, not to the men, but to human nature resident in them. There be indeed divers other sorts of love, in nature and object more restrained, built upon narrower foundations, and requiring more extraordinary acts of duty and respect, not competent to all men; as a love of friendship, founded upon long acquaintance, suitableness of disposition, and frequent exchanges of mutual kindness: a love of gratitude, due to the reception of valuable benefits; a love of esteem, belonging to persons endued with worth and virtue; a love of relation, resulting from kindred, affinity, neighbourhood, and other common engagements. But the love of benevolence, (which is precedent to these, and more deeply rooted in nature, more ancient, more unconfined, and more

<sup>a</sup> [Aristot. apud Stob. Flor. Tit. xxxvii. 32. Tom. ii. p. 56. Ed. Gaisford.]

immutable,) and the duties mentioned, consequent on it, are grounded upon the natural constitution, necessary properties, and unalterable condition of humanity, and are upon several accounts due thereto.

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I Upon account of universal cognation, agreement, and similitude of nature. For, Οἰκεῖον ἅπας ἄνθρωπος ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ φίλον; *All men naturally are of kin and friends to each other*, saith Aristotle<sup>b</sup>. *Fratres autem etiam vestri sumus, jure naturæ matris unius; We are also your brethren in the right of nature, our common mother*, saith Tertulian<sup>c</sup> of old, in the name of the Christians to the heathens. We are but several streams issuing from one primitive source; several branches sprouting from the same stock; several stones hewed out of the same quarry: one substance, by miraculous efficacy of the divine benediction diffused and multiplied. One element affords us matter, and one fire actuates it, kindled at first by the breath of God. One blood flows in all our veins; one nourishment repairs our decayed bodies, and one common air refreshes our languishing spirits<sup>d</sup>. We are cohabitants of the same earth, and fellow-citizens of the same great commonwealth; *Unam omnium rempublicam agnoscimus, mundum*, said the fore-mentioned Apologist for Christianity<sup>e</sup>. We were

Acts xvii.  
26.

<sup>b</sup> Eth. viii. 1. [3.]

<sup>c</sup> Apolog. [Cap. xxxix. Opp. p. 31. B.]

<sup>d</sup> Ἀνδράποδον, οὐκ ἀνέξῃ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ τοῦ σαυτοῦ, ὃς ἔχει τὸν Δία πρόγονον, ὥσπερ υἱὸς ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν σπερμάτων γέγονε, καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς ἄνωθεν καταβολῆς; &c.—Epict. Diss. i. 13. [3.]

Nemo est in genere humano, cui non dilectio, etsi non pro mutua caritate, pro ipsa tamen communis naturæ societate debeat. —Aug. [Ep. cxxx. ad Probam. Opp. Tom. ii. col. 387. c.]

<sup>e</sup> Tert. Apolog. [Cap. xxxviii. Opp. p. 30. D.]

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17.

all fashioned according to the same original idea, (resembling God our common Father,) all endowed with the same faculties, inclinations, and affections; all conspire in the essential and more notable ingredients of our constitution; and are only distinguished by some accidental, inconsiderable circumstances of age, place, colour, stature, fortune, and the like; in which we differ as much from ourselves in successions of time. So that what Aristotle said of a friend is applicable to every man; every man is, *Ἄλλος αὐτὸς*, *Another ourself*<sup>f</sup>: and he that hates another, detests his own most lively picture<sup>g</sup>; he that harms another, injures his own nature; he that denies relief to another, starves a member of his own body, and withers a branch of his own tree. *The merciful man doeth good to his own soul; but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.* Neither can any personal demerit of vicious habit, erroneous opinion, enormous practice, or signal discourtesy towards us, dissolve these bands: for as no unkindness of a brother can wholly rescind that relation, or disoblige us from the duties annexed thereto; so neither upon the faults or injuries of any man can we ground a total dispensation from the offices of humanity, especially if the injuries be not irreparable, nor the faults incurable.

2 We are indispensably obliged to these duties, because the best of our natural inclinations prompt us to the performance of them; especially those of pity and benignity, which are manifestly discernible in all, but most powerful and vigorous

<sup>f</sup> [Eth. ix. 4. 5.]

<sup>g</sup> Nihil est enim unum uni tam simile, tam par, quam omnes inter nosmetipsos sumus.—Cic. de Leg. i. [10. 29.]

in the best natures ; and which, questionless, by the most wise and good Author of our beings were implanted therein both as monitors to direct, and as spurs to incite us to the performance of our duty. For the same bowels, that, in our want of necessary sustenance, do by a lively sense of pain inform us thereof, and instigate us to provide against it, do in like manner grievously resent the distresses of another, and thereby admonish us of our duty, and provoke us to relieve them. Even the stories of calamities, that in ages long since past have happened to persons nowise related to us, yea, the fabulous reports of tragical events, do (even against the bent of our wills, and all resistance of reason) melt our hearts with compassion, and draw tears from our eyes : and thereby evidently signify that general sympathy<sup>b</sup> which naturally intercedes between all men, since we can neither see, nor hear of, nor imagine another's grief, without being afflicted ourselves. Antipathies may be natural to wild beasts ; but to rational creatures they are wholly unnatural. And on the other side, as nature to eating and drinking, and such acts requisite to the preservation of our life, hath adjoined a sensible pleasure and satisfaction, enticing us to, and encouraging us in the performance of them ; so, and doubtless to the same end, hath she made relieving the necessities of others, and doing good offices to them, to be accompanied with a very contentful and delicious relish to the mind of the

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<sup>b</sup> . . . . . Hæc nostri pars optima sensus.

Juv. Sat. xv. [133.]

. . . . . Mutuus ut nos

Affectus petere auxilium et præstare juberet.

Id. Ibid. [149.]

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doer. Epicurus, that great master of pleasure, did himself confess, that to bestow benefits was not only more brave, but more pleasant than to receive them ; (Επίκουρος, saith Plutarch<sup>1</sup>, τοῦ εὖ πάσχειν, τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν, οὐ μόνον κάλλιον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡδίων εἶναι φησί.) And, certainly, no kind of actions a man can perform are attended with a more pure, more perfect, more savoury delight, than those of beneficence are. Since nature therefore hath made our neighbour's misery our pain, and his content our pleasure ; since with indissoluble bands of mutual sympathy she hath concatenated our fortunes and affections together ; since by the discipline of our sense she instructs us, and by the importunity thereof solicits us to the observance of our duty, let us follow her wise directions, and conspire with her kindly motions ; let us not stifle or weaken by disuse, or contrary practice, but by conformable action cherish and confirm the good inclinations of nature. '

3 We are obliged to these duties upon account of common equity. We have all (the most sour and stoical of us all) implanted in us a natural ambition, and a desire (which we can by no means eradicate) of being beloved and respected by all ; and are disposed in our need to demand assistance, commiseration of our misfortunes, and relief in our distress of all that are in capacity to afford them ; and are apt to be vehemently displeased, to think ourselves hardly dealt with, and to complain of cruelty and inhumanity in those that refuse them to us : and therefore, in all reason and equity, we should

<sup>1</sup> De Phil. Convictu cum Princip. [Opp. Tom. III. p. 1393. Ed. Steph.]

Εὐφραίνου τὸ εὐεργετεῖν.—Marc. Ant. [vii. § 13.]

readily pay the same love, respect, aid, and comfort to others, which we expect from others ; for, SERM.  
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*Beneficium dare qui nescit, injuste petit*<sup>k</sup>; nothing is more unreasonable, or unequal, than to require from others those good turns, which, upon like occasion, we are unwilling to render to others.

4 We are obliged to these duties of humanity, upon account of common interest, benefit, and advantage. The welfare and safety, the honour and reputation, the pleasure and quiet of our lives are concerned in our maintaining a loving correspondence with all men. For so uncertain is our condition, so obnoxious are we to manifold necessities, that there is no man whose good-will we may not need, whose good word may not stand us in stead, whose helpful endeavour may not sometime oblige us. The great Pompey, the glorious triumpher over nations, and admired darling of fortune, was beholden at last to a slave for the composing his ashes, and celebrating his funeral obsequies. The honour of the greatest men depends on the estimation of the least ; and the good-will of the meanest peasant is a brighter ornament to the fortune, a greater accession to the grandeur of a prince, than the most radiant gem in his royal diadem. However the spite and enmity of one (and him the most weak otherwise and contemptible) person may happen to spoil the content of our whole life, and deprive us of the most comfortable enjoyments thereof ; may divert our thoughts from our delightful employments to a solicitous care of self-preservation and defence ; may discompose our minds with vexatious passions ; may by false reports, odious

<sup>k</sup> [Publ. Syrus. (Poet. Scen. Latin. Vol. vi. p. 228. Ed. Bothe).]



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suggestions, and slanderous defamations blast our credit, raise a storm of general hatred, and conjure up thousands of enemies against us; may by insidious practices supplant and undermine us, prejudice our welfare, endanger our estate, and involve us in a bottomless gulph of trouble: it is but reasonable therefore, if we desire to live securely, comfortably, and quietly, that by all honest means we should endeavour to purchase the good-will of all men, and provoke no man's enmity needlessly; since any man's love may be useful, and every man's hatred is dangerous.

5 We are obliged to these duties by a tacit compact and fundamental constitution of mankind, in pursuance of those principal designs, for which men were incorporated, and are still contained in civil society. For to this purpose do men congregate, cohabit and combine themselves in sociable communion, that thereby they may enjoy a delightful conversation, void of fear, free from suspicion, and free from danger; promote mutual advantage and satisfaction; be helpful and beneficial each to other: abstracting from which commodities, the retirements of a cloister, or the solitudes of a desert, the life of a recluse, or of a wild beast, would perhaps be more desirable than these of gregarious converse: for as men, being pleased and well-affected to each other, are the most obliging friends, and pleasant companions; so being enraged, they are the most mischievous and dangerous neighbours, the most fierce and savage enemies. By neglecting, therefore, or contravening these duties of humanity, we frustrate the main ends of society, disappoint the expectations of each other, subvert

the grounds of ordinary civility, and in the commonwealth deal as unpolitically, as the members in the body should act unnaturally, in subtracting mutual assistance, or harming each other; as if the eye should deny to the hands the direction of sight, and the hands in revenge should pluck out the eyes.

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6 We are by observing these rules to oblige and render men well-affected to us, because being upon such terms with men conduceth to our living (not only delightfully and quietly, but) honestly and religiously in this world. How peace and edification, spiritual comfort and temporal quiet do concur and cooperate, we see intimated Acts ix. 31: *Then had the churches peace throughout all Judæa, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified: and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.* St Paul advised the Christians of his time, liable to persecution, *To make prayers for all men, (and especially for those in eminent power,) that they might lead a quiet and peaceable life<sup>1</sup> in all godliness and honesty;* to pray for them, that is, to pray that they might be so disposed, as not to molest, interrupt, or discourage them in the exercise of virtue, and practice of piety. For these by a tranquillity of mind, a sedateness of affections, a competency of rest, and leisure, and retirement, a freedom from amazing fear, distracting care, and painful sense, are greatly advanced; of which advantages by contentious broils and enmities we are deprived, and encumbered with the contrary impediments. They breed thorny anxieties, and by them choke the seeds of

1 Tim. ii.  
1, 2.

<sup>1</sup> Ἡρεμὸν καὶ ἡσυχίον βίον, a retired and quiet life.

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good intention: they raise dusky fumes of melancholy, by them intercepting the beams of spiritual light, and stifling the flames of devout affection. By them our thoughts are affixed upon the basest, and taken off from the most excellent objects; our fancies are disordered by turbulent animosities; our time is spent, and our endeavour taken up in the most ungrateful and unprofitable employments, of defeating the attempts, resisting the assaults, disproving the calumnies, countermining the plots of adversaries; they bring us upon the stage against our will, and make us act parts in tragedies, neither becoming, nor delighting us. They disturb often our natural rest, and hinder us in the despatch of our ordinary business; and much more impeach the steadiness of our devotion, and obstruct the course of religious practice. They tempt us also to omissions of our duty, to unseemly behaviour, and to the commissions of grievous sin; to harsh censure, envious detraction, unwarrantable revenge, repining at the good successes, and delighting in the misfortunes of others. Many examples occur in history, like those of Hanno the Carthaginian, and Q. Metellus, (Pompey's antagonist,) who, in pursuance of some private grudges, have not only betrayed their own interests, and sullied their own reputations; but notably disserved and damaged the public weal of their country: and so will our being engaged in enmity with men cause us to neglect, if not to contradict, our dearest concerns; whence we should carefully avoid the occasions thereof, and by an innocent and beneficent conversation oblige men to a friendly correspondence with us.

7 We are obliged to perform these duties of SERM.  
XXXII. humanity, because by so doing we become more capable of promoting goodness in others, and so of fulfilling the highest duties of Christian charity; of successfully advising and admonishing others; of instructing their ignorance, and convincing their mistakes; of removing their prejudices, and satisfying their scruples; of reclaiming them from vice, error, faction; and reconciling them to virtue, truth, and peace. For by no force of reason, or stratagem of wit, are men so easily subdued, by no bait so thoroughly allured and caught, as by real courtesy, gentleness, and affability; as on the other side, by a sour and peevish humour, supercilious looks, bitter language, and harsh dealing, men are rendered indocile, and intractable, averse from better instruction, obstinate in their ways, and pertinacious in their conceits. Easily do men swallow the pill gilded with fair carriage, and sweetened by kind speech; readily do they afford a favourable ear to the advice seeming to proceed from good-will, and a tender care of their good: but the physic of wholesome admonition, being steeped in the vinegar of reproach and tempered with the gall of passion, becomes distasteful and loathsome to the patient: neither will men willingly listen to the reasonings of those, whom they apprehend disaffected to their persons, and more desirous to wound their reputations, than to cure their distempers. The slightest argument, the most simple and unpolished oration, issuing from the mouth of a friend, is wonderfully more prevalent, than the strongest demonstration, than the most powerful eloquence of an enemy. For obliging usage and courteous speech unlock

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the affections, and by them insinuate into the reason of men: but surly deportment and froward expressions dam up the attention with prejudice, and interclude all avenues to the understanding. An illustration of which discourse we have from comparing the different practice of the Jews, and the ancient Christians, with the contrary successes thereof. The Jews, by their seditious and turbulent practices, by their insolent contempt, and implacable hatred of others; (for you know what Tacitus<sup>m</sup> saith of them: *Apud ipsos fides obstinata, misericordia in promptu, sed adversus omnes alios hostile odium;*) by their perverse and unsociable humours, declining all intercourse, and refusing ordinary offices of humanity (so much as to shew the way, or to direct the thirsty traveller to the fountain) to any not of their own sect, did procure an odium, scorn, and infamy upon their Religion, rendered all men averse from inquiring into, or entertaining any good opinion thereof, and so very little enlarged its bounds, and gained few proselytes thereto. But the Christians, by a mild, patient, and peaceable behaviour; by obedience to laws, and compliance with harmless customs; by perfect innocence and abstinence from doing injury; by paying due respects, and performing civil offices and demonstrations of benevolence; by loving conversation and friendly commerce with all, commended their doctrine to the regard of men<sup>n</sup>: and by

<sup>m</sup> Hist. v. [5.]

<sup>n</sup> Thus the ancient Christians: but when Religion declined, dissension and ill-will did grow; so that the heathen historian (Ammianus Marcellinus) could say of Julian: *Nullas infestas hominibus bestias, ut sunt sibi ferales plerique Christianorum, expertus.*—Lib. xxii. [5, 4.]

this only piece of rhetoric (without terror of arms SERM.  
XXXII. or countenance of power, or plausibility of discourse, or promise of temporal reward) subdued the faith of men, and persuaded a great part of the world to embrace their excellent profession. *We converse with you like men, we use the same diet, habit, and necessary furniture: we have recourse to your tribunals; we frequent your markets, your fairs, your shops, your stalls, your shambles, your baths: we cohabit, we sail, we war, we till, we trade, we maintain all manner of commerce with you*<sup>o</sup>; saith the Christian Apologist to the Pagans, in behalf of the ancient Christians. Which kind of practice they derived not only from the sweet temper and noble genius of their Religion, but from the express institution of the first teachers thereof, and from their exemplary practice therein. For both by doctrine did the Apostles exhort, and by their example incite them to adorn the Gospel, and render the discipline of Christ amiable by their meek, gentle, compliant and inoffensive conversation; and thereby to allure others to a willing entertainment thereof. To this purpose are those exhortations, *Let your moderation* (τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν, *your equity,* Phil. iv. 5. *or gentleness*) *be known to all men: and, Comfort the afflicted, support the weak, be long-suffering* 1 Thess. v. 14, 15. *toward all. Be ye all careful not to render evil for evil, but always pursue goodness toward each other, and toward all: and, As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men: and, Put them in mind to be* Gal. vi. 10. Tit. iii. 1, 2.

<sup>o</sup> [Itaque non sine foro, non sine macello, non sine balneis, tabernis, officinis, stabulis, nundinis vestris, ceterisque commerciis cohabitamus hoc seculum. Navigamus et nos vobiscum, et vobiscum militamus, et rusticamur, et mercamur.—Tert. Apolog. Cap. xlii. Opp. p. 33. D.]

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2 Tim. ii.  
24, 25.

*subject to principalities and powers, to be ready to every good work, to reproach no man, not to be contentious, but gentle, shewing all meekness to all men: and, The minister of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; (or those that are otherwise disposed, τοὺς ἀντιδιατιθεμένους:) if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth: where gentleness toward all, and meekness toward adversaries, are oppositely conjoined, with aptness to teach and instruct; the one qualification so effectually predisposing to the other: and it is beside intimated, that gentle and meek treatment are suitable instruments ordinarily employed by God to convert men from error to truth.*

1 Cor. x.  
32, 33.

1 Cor. ix.  
19, 22.

8 We are bound hereto in compliance and conformity to the best patterns; God, Christ, the Apostles, the primitive saints. This illustrious doctor of Christian Religion, St Paul, did not fail to second this his doctrine with his own example: for, *Give none offence, saith he, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God; even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Please all men in all things: what could St Paul say, or what do more? And again, For though, saith he, I be free from all men, yet have I made myself a servant unto all, that I might gain the more. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that by all means I might save some. See how far this charitable design of doing good to others transported him: he parted with his own*

freedom, that he might redeem them from the slavery of a wicked life; he denied his own present satisfaction, that he might procure them a lasting content; he despised his own profit, that he might promote their spiritual advantage; he prostituted his own reputation, that he might advance them to a condition of true glory. He underwent grievous afflictions for their comfort, sustained restless pains for their ease, and hazarded his own safety for their salvation. He condescended to their infirmities, suited his demeanour to their tempers, complied with their various humours, and contrary customs: he differed from himself, that he might agree with them, and transformed himself into all shapes, that he might convert them into what they should be, reform their manners, and translate them into a happy estate. But above all is the practice of our Lord himself most remarkable to this purpose; and discovers plainly to him that observes an universally large and unrestrained philanthropy. For having from a wonderful conspiracy of kindness and good-will (between him and his eternal Father) toward the world of men, descended willingly from the throne of his celestial majesty, and enveloped his divine glory in a cloud of mortal frailty, and, *That*, as the Apostle saith, Col. i. 20. *he might reconcile all things in heaven and earth, conjoin God and man by a nearer alliance, and unite men together by the more sacred bands of common relation to himself: having assumed not only the outward shape and corporeal resemblance of man, but the inward frame, and real passions of human souls; he disdained not, accordingly, to obey the laws, to follow the inclinations, to observe the*



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Matt. xi.  
19.

Acts x. 38.

Matt. ix.  
35.

Luke xviii.  
9.

Rom. viii.  
32.

duties of the best and most perfect humanity; with an equal and impartial bounty imparting free admittance, familiar converse, friendly aid and succour unto all, even the worst of men in all appearance, (and that so far, that some rigorous censurers thence presumed to tax him as a glutton, and a good-fellow, a friend to publicans and sinners,) distributing liberally to all the incomparable benefits of his heavenly doctrine, of his holy example, of his miraculous power; instructing the ignorances, detecting the errors, dispossessing the devils; sustaining the weaknesses, overlooking the injuries, comforting the afflictions, supplying the necessities, healing the diseases, and remedying all the miseries of all, that did not wilfully reject their own welfare: *He went about, saith St Peter in the Acts, doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: and, He went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people, saith St Matthew's Gospel.* He despised not the meanest, either in outward estate, or spiritual improvement. He invited all unto him, repelled or discouraged none; nor refused to any that came unto him his counsel or his help. He was averse from no man's society, (and if in any degree from any, chiefly from those, who confidently pretended to extraordinary sanctity, and proudly contemned others.) Meek and gentle he was, mild and patient; courteous and benign; lowly and condescensive; tender and compassionate in his conversation unto all. And for a complement of his transcendent charity, and for an enforcement unto ours, he laid down his

life for us all, as a common price to purchase re-  
mission of sins; a general ransom to redeem the  
human creation from the captivity of hell and sla-  
very of corruption into the glorious liberty of the  
sons of God; demolishing by his pacific death all  
partition-walls, and laying open all enclosures of  
the divine favour; reconciling God to man, and  
combining man to himself by the fresh cement of his  
precious blood: so that now not only as fellow crea-  
tures, but (which is exceedingly more) as partakers  
of the same common Redemption, as objects of the  
same mercy, as obliged in the same common debt,  
and as capable of the same eternal happiness, by  
new and firmer engagements we are bound to all  
mutual kindness and benevolence toward all. For,  
*Destroy not*, saith St Paul, (and by like reason I  
may say, harm not, vex not, be not unkind to)  
*him, for whom Christ died.*

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Rom. xiv.

<sup>15.</sup>

Nay, further, we have the example of Almighty  
God himself directing, and by our Saviour's express  
admonition obliging us to this universal beneficence,  
compassion, and patience towards all: who by ex-  
press testimony of sacred writ, and by palpable  
signs of continual experience, declareth himself to  
be a lover of mankind; to be good to all, and  
tenderly merciful over all his works; not to afflict  
willingly, nor grieve the children of men; to com-  
passionate the miseries, and supply the needs, and  
relieve the distresses, to desire the salvation, and to  
delight in the happiness of men: who, with an  
indifferent unlimited munificence, dispenses his  
blessings, extends his watchful providence, and  
imparts his loving care unto all; causing his sun  
with comfortable beams to shine, and the refreshing

Tit. iii. 4.  
Ps. cxlv. 9.

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2 Cor. v.  
20.

showers to descend, the earth to yield her pleasant fruits, the temperate seasons to recur, and all the elements to minister succour, joy, and satisfaction even to the most impious and ungrateful toward him<sup>p</sup>: who, with immense clemency and long-sufferance, overlooks the sacrilegious affronts offered daily to his majesty, the outrageous violations of his laws, and the contemptuous neglects of his unexpressible goodness: who patiently waits for the repentance, and incessantly solicits the reconciliation, courts the amity, and in a manner begs the good-will of his most deadly enemies; whom he hath always in his hand, and can crush to nothing at his pleasure. For, *We are ambassadors for Christ, as if God by us did entreat you: we beseech you in Christ's behalf; be reconciled to God*, saith St Paul.

Since therefore upon account of natural consanguinity, of our best inclinations, of common equity, and general advantage, and an implicit compact between men; of securing our, and promoting others' virtue and piety; from the exhortations of scripture mentioned, and many more tending to the same purpose; from the example of the ancient Christians, the leaders and champions of our Religion, of the Apostles, the masters and patriarchs thereof, of our blessed Redeemer, and of Almighty God himself, we are obliged to this universal benevolence and beneficence toward all; no misapprehensions of judgment, no miscarriages in practice, no ill dispositions of soul, no demerits in himself, no discourtesies toward us, ought wholly to alienate

<sup>p</sup> Vid. Clement. ad Cor. Ep. i. cap. xx. [Cot. Pat. Apost. Tom. i. p. 157.]

our affections from, or to avert us from doing good, or to incline us to render evil for evil unto any person: especially considering, that the omissions of others cannot excuse us from the performance of our duty; that no man is to be presumed incorrigible, nor (like the lapsed Angels) concluded in desperate impenitence; and that our loving and gentle demeanour toward them may be instrumental to their amendment, and the contrary may contribute to their progress and continuance in offences; that God hath promised to us a reward of our patience, and hath reserved to them a season of judgment and punishment, if they persist obstinate in their disorderly courses; that to avenge their trespasses belongs not to us, but to Almighty God, who is more nearly concerned in, and more injured by them, and is yet content to endure them, to prolong their lives, to continue his benefits to them, and to expect their conversion: that our differing from them is not to be attributed to ourselves, but wholly, or chiefly, to the goodness of God; that we always were, are, and shall be liable to the same errors, vices, and misdemeanours: that, lastly, the faults and follies of others, like the maims of body, distempers of soul, or crosses of fortune, (being their own greatest unhappinesses,) require rather our pity than our hatred, to be eased by our help than aggravated by our unkindness. 'Tis too scant, therefore, and narrow a charity that is limited by correspondence of courtesy, or by the personal merits of others. We are bound to live peaceably with, that is, to be innocent, beneficial, respective to all, and to seek the reciprocal good-will, love, and amity of all. But I have insisted too long

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upon this particular, concerning the object of this duty, and its extension.

III. I proceed briefly to consider whence it comes, that, (as I before observed was intimated in these words, *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you,*) though we do our parts, and perform carefully the duties incumbent on us, though we bear goodwill, and do good offices, and yield due respects, and abstain from all not only injurious, but rigorous dealings toward all; though we revile none, nor censure harshly, nor presumptuously intermeddle with others' affairs; though we obey laws, and comply with received customs, and avoid all occasions of contention; though our tempers be meek, our principles peaceable, and our conversations inoffensive, we may yet prove successful in our endeavours to live peaceably, and may be hated, harmed, and disquieted in our course of life. That it so happens, we find by plain experience, and manifold example. For *Moses the meekest man upon earth*, and commended beside by all circumstances of divine favour, and human worth, was yet often envied, impugned, and molested by those, whom by all manner of benefits he had most highly obliged. And we find David frequently complaining, that by those, whose good-will, by performing all offices of friendly kindness and brotherly affection, he had studiously laboured to deserve, whose maladies and calamities he had not only tenderly commiserated, but had prayed and humbled his soul with fasting for their recovery and deliverance from them, was yet recompensed by their treacherous devices against his safety, by grievous reproaches, and scornful insultings over him in his affliction; as

Num. xii.  
3.

Ps. lv. 12,  
&c.

we see at large in Psalms xxxv. and lxix. And in SERM. XXXII.  
Psalm cxx. he thus lamentably bemoans his condi-  
tion: *Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar: My soul hath long dwelt* Ps. cxx. 5-7.  
*with him that hateth peace: I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war.* And our blessed Saviour himself, though in the whole tenor of his life he demonstrated an incomparable meekness and sweetness of disposition, and exercised continually all manner of kindness and beneficence toward all men, was notwithstanding loaded with all kinds of injuries and contumelies, was bitterly hated, ignominiously disgraced, and maliciously persecuted unto death. And the same lot befell his faithful disciples, that although their design was benign and charitable, their carriage blameless and obliging toward all, they were yet pursued constantly both by the outrageous clamours of the people, and cruel usages from those in eminent power. Now though it seem strange and almost incredible, that they who are truly friends to all, and are ready to do to all what good they can; who willingly displease none, but industriously strive to acquire (not with glozing shows of popularity, but by real expressions of kindness) the good-will and favour of all, should yet be maligned, or molested by any; yet seeing it so happens, if we inquire into the reason, we shall find this miracle in morality to proceed (to omit the neglect of the duties mentioned in our former discourse) chiefly from the exceeding variety, difference, and contrariety of men's dispositions, joined with the morosity, aptness to mistake, envy, or unreasonable perverseness of some; which necessarily render the means of attaining all men's

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good-will insufficient, and the endeavours unsuccessful. For men seeing by several lights, relishing with diversely disposed palates, and measuring things by different standards, we can hardly do or say any thing, which, if approved and applauded by some, will not be disliked and blamed by others; if it advance us in the opinion of some, will not as much depress us in the judgment of others; so that, in this irreconcilable diversity and inconsistency of men's apprehensions, it is impossible not to displease many; especially since some men either by their natural temper, or from the influence of some sour principles they have imbibed, are so morose, rigid, and self-willed; so impatient of all contradiction to, or discrepancy from their sentiments, that they cannot endure any to dissent in judgment, or vary in practice from them, without incurring their heavy disdain and censure. And, which makes the matter more desperate and remediless, such men commonly being least able either to manage their reason or to command their passion, as guided wholly by certain blind impulses of fancy, or groundless prejudices of conceit, or by a partial admiration of some men's persons, examples, and authorities, are usually most resolute and peremptory in their courses, and thence hardly capable of any change, mitigation, or amendment. Of which sort there being divers engaged in several ways, it is impossible to please some without disgusting the other; and difficult altogether to approach any of these wasps without being stung or vexed by them. Some also are so apt to misunderstand men's meanings, to misconstrue their words, and to make ill descants upon, or draw bad con-

sequences from their actions, that it is not possible to prevent their entertaining ill-favoured prejudices against even those that are heartily their friends, and wish them the best. To others the good and prosperous estate of their neighbour, that he flourishes in wealth, power, or reputation, is ground sufficient of hatred and enmity against him : for so we see, that Cain hated his innocent brother Abel, because his brother's works were more righteous, and his sacrifices better accepted, than his own ; that Joseph's brethren were mortally offended at him, because his father especially loved and delighted in him ; that Saul was enraged against David, because his gallant deeds were celebrated with due praises and joyful acclamations of the people ; and that the Babylonian princes upon no other score maligned Daniel, but because he enjoyed the favour of the king, and a dignity answerable to his deserts. And who, that loves his own welfare, can possibly avoid such enmities as these ? But the fatal rock, upon which peaceable designs are most inevitably split, and which, by no prudent steering our course, can sometimes be evaded, is the unreasonable perverseness of men's pretences, who sometimes will upon no terms be friends with us, or allow us their good-will, but upon condition of concurring with them in dishonest and unwarrantable practices ; of omitting some duties, to which by the express command of God, or evident dictates of right reason, we are obliged, or performing some action repugnant to those indispensable rules. But though peace with men is highly valuable, and possessing their good-will in worth not inferior to any other indifferent accommodation of life, yet are



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these nothing comparable to the favour of God, or the internal satisfaction of conscience; nor, though we were assured thereby to gain the entire love and favour of all men living, are we to purchase them at so dear a rate, as with the loss of these. We must not, to please or gratify men, commit any thing prohibited, or omit any thing enjoined by God, the least glimpse of whose favourable aspect is infinitely more to be prized, than the most intimate friendship of the mightiest monarchs upon earth; and the least spark of whose indignation is more to be dreaded, than the extremest displeasure of the whole world. In case of such competition,

Gal. i. 10. we must resolve with St Paul, *Do I yet conciliate God, or do I endeavour to soothe men? For if I yet soothed (or flattered) men, (so you know ἀπεσκέυ signifies,) I were not the servant of Christ.* Nor are we, that we may satisfy any man's pleasure, to contravene the dictates of reason, (that subordinate guide of our actions,) to do any dishonourable or uncomely action, unworthy of a man, misbeseeming our education, or incongruous to our station in human society, so as to make ourselves worthily despicable to the most by contenting some: nor are we bound always to desert our own considerable interest, or betray our just liberty, that we may avoid the enmity of such as would violently or fraudulently encroach upon them. Nor are we in the administration of justice, distribution of rewards, or arbitration of controversies, to respect the particular favour of any, but the merits only of the cause, or the worth of the persons concerned. Nor are we by feeding men's distempered humours, or gratifying their abused fancies, to prejudice or

neglect their real good; to encourage them in bad practices, to foment their irregular passions, to applaud their unjust or uncharitable censures, or to puff up their minds with vain conceit by servile flattery: but rather, like faithful physicians, to administer wholesome, though unsavoury advice; to reveal to them their mistakes, to check their intended progress in bad courses, to reprove their faults seasonably, and when it may probably do them good, though possibly thereby we may provoke their anger and procure their ill-will, and, as St Paul saith, become their enemies, for telling them the truth. Nor are we ever explicitly to assent to falsehoods, (so apprehended by us,) to belie our consciences, or contradict our real judgments; (though we may sometimes for peace sake prudently conceal them;) nor to deny the truth our defence and patronage, when in order to some good purpose it needs and requires them, though thereby we may incur the dislike, and forfeit the good-will of some men. Nor are we by entertaining any extraordinary friendship, intimate familiarity, or frequent converse with persons notoriously dissolute in their manners, disorderly in their behaviour, or erroneous in weighty points of opinion, to countenance their misdemeanours, dishonour our profession, render ourselves justly suspected, run the hazard of contagion, or hinder their reformation. And especially we are warily to decline the particular acquaintance of men of contentious dispositions, mischievous principles, and factious designs; a bare keeping company with whom looks like a conspiracy, an approving or abetting their proceedings; the refusing any encouragement, signification of

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Gal. iv. 16.

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esteem, or vouchsafing any peculiar respect to such, we owe to the honour of virtue, which they disgrace, to the love of truth, which they oppugn, to the peace of the world, which they disturb, and to the general good of mankind, which they impeach.

And so St Paul warns us, *Not to mingle or consort, not to diet or common*, (*Μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι*, and *μὴ συνεσθίειν*), *with men of a dissolute and disorderly conversation*: and, *To mark them which cause seditions, and scandals, contrary to Christian doctrine, and to shun or decline them*, (*ἐκκλίνειν ἀπ' αὐτῶν*) and, *To repudiate, deprecate the familiarity of heretics*, (*Αἰρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον παραιτεῖσθαι*). And St John forbids us to wish joy, or to allow the ordinary respects of civil salutation, to apostates and imposters; lest, (by such demonstration of favour,) we communicate with them in their wicked works. None of which precepts are intended to interdict to us, or to disoblige us from bearing real good-will, or dispensing needful benefits to any, but to deter us from yielding any signal countenance to vice and impiety; and to excite us to declare such dislike and detestation of those heinous enormities, as may confer to the reclaiming of these, and prevent the seduction of others. So St Paul expressly, *But if any man obey not our injunction by this epistle, do not consort with him, that he may by shame be reclaimed* (*ἵνα ἐντραπῇ*): and, *Account him not an enemy, but admonish him as a brother*. Nor ought, lastly, the love of peace, and desire of friendly correspondence with any man avert us from an honest zeal (proportionable to our abilities and opportunities) of promoting the concerns of truth and goodness, though against

1 Cor. v.  
11.

2 Thess.  
iii. 11.  
Rom. xvi.  
17.

Tit. iii. 10.

2 John 10,  
11.

2 Thess.  
iii. 14, 15.

powerful and dangerous opposition; I say an honest zeal, meaning thereby, not that blind, heady passion, or inflammation of spirit, transporting men beyond the bounds of reason and discretion, upon some superficially plausible pretences, to violent and irregular practices; but a considerate and steady resolution of mind, effectually animating a man by warrantable and decent means vigorously to prosecute commendable designs; like that St Jude mentions, of *Striving earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints*. For this zeal may be very consistent with, yea, greatly conducive to the designs of peace. And 'tis not a drowsiness, a slack remissness, a heartless diffidence, or a cowardly flinching from the face of danger and opposition we discourse about, or plead for; but a wise and wary declining the occasions of needless and unprofitable disturbance to ourselves and others.

To conclude this point, (which, if time would have permitted, I should have handled more fully and distinctly,) though to preserve peace, and purchase the good-will of men, we may and ought to quit much of our private interest and satisfaction, yet ought we not to sacrifice to them what is not our own, nor committed absolutely to our disposal, and which in value incomparably transcends them, the maintenance of truth, the advancement of justice, the practice of virtue, the quiet of our conscience, the favour of Almighty God. And if, for being dutiful to God, and faithful to ourselves in these particulars, any men will hate, vex, and despise us; frustrate our desires, and defeat our purposes of living peaceably with all men in this world; we may comfort ourselves in the enjoyment of eternal

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Now briefly to induce us to the practice of this duty of living peaceably, we may consider,

Ps. cxxxiii.  
1.

I *How good and pleasant a thing it is, as David saith, for brethren (and so we are all at least by nature) to live together in unity.* How that, as

Prov. xvii.  
1.

Solomon saith, *Better is a dry morsel and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife.*

How delicious that conversation is, which is accompanied with a mutual confidence, freedom, courtesy, and complacency: how calm the mind, how composed the affections, how serene the countenance, how melodious the voice, how sweet the sleep, how contentful the whole life is of him, that neither deviseth mischief against others, nor suspects any to be contrived against himself; and contrariwise, how ingrateful and loathsome a thing it is to abide in a state of enmity, wrath, dissension; having the thoughts distracted with solicitous care, anxious suspicion, envious regret; the heart boiling with choler, the face overclouded with discontent, the tongue jarring and out of tune, the ears filled with discordant noises of contradiction, clamour, and reproach; the whole frame of body and soul distempered and disturbed with the worst of passions. How much more comfortable it is to walk in smooth and even paths, than to wander in rugged ways overgrown with briers, obstructed with rubs, and beset with snares; to sail steadily in a quiet, than to be tossed in a tempestuous sea; to behold the lovely face of heaven smiling with a cheerful serenity, than to see it frowning with clouds, or

raging with storms; to hear harmonious consents, SERM.  
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than dissonant janglings; to see objects correspondent in graceful symmetry, than lying disorderly in confused heaps; to be in health, and have the natural humours consent in moderate temper, than (as it happens in diseases) agitated with tumultuous commotions: how all senses and faculties of man unanimously rejoice in those emblems of peace, order, harmony, and proportion; yea, how nature universally delights in a quiet stability, or undisturbed progress of motion; the beauty, strength, and vigour of every thing requires a concurrence of force, co-operation, and contribution of help; all things thrive and flourish by communicating reciprocal aid, and the world subsists by a friendly conspiracy of its parts<sup>a</sup>; and especially, that political society of men chiefly aims at peace as its end, depends on it as its cause, relies on it as its support. How much a peaceful state resembles heaven, unto which, *Neither complaint, pain, nor clamour* (Οὔτε πένθος, Rev. xxi.  
*οὔτε πόνος, οὔτε κραυγή,* as it is in the Apocalypse)<sup>4</sup> do ever enter; but blessed souls converse together in perfect love, and in perpetual concord: and how a condition of enmity represents the state of hell, that black and dismal region of dark hatred, fiery wrath, and horrible tumult. How like a paradise the world would be, flourishing in joy and rest, if men would cheerfully conspire in affection, and helpfully contribute to each other's content: and how like a savage wilderness now it is, when, like wild beasts, they vex and persecute, worry and devour each other. How not only philosophy hath

<sup>a</sup> Vid. Clement. ad Cor. Ep. i. cap. xx. [Cotel. Pat. Apost. Tom. i. p. 157.]

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placed the supreme pitch of happiness in a calmness of mind and tranquillity of life, void of care and trouble, of irregular passions and perturbations; but that holy scripture itself in that one term of peace most usually comprehends all joy and content, all felicity and prosperity: so that the heavenly consort of Angels, when they agree most highly to bless, and to wish the greatest happiness to mankind, could not better express their sense, than by saying, *Be on earth peace, and good-will among men.*

Luke ii. 14.

Prov. xx.  
3.

2 That as nothing is more sweet and delightful, so nothing more comely and agreeable to human nature than peaceable living, *It being*, as Solomon saith, *an honour to a man to cease from strife*: and consequently also a disgrace to him to continue therein: that rage and fury may be the excellencies of beasts, and the exerting their natural animosity in strife and combat may become them; but reason and discretion are the singular eminences of men, and the use of these the most natural and commendable method of deciding controversies among them: and that it extremely misbecomes them that are endowed with those excellent faculties so to abuse them, as not to apprehend each other's meanings, but to ground vexatious quarrels upon the mistake of them; not to be able by reasonable expedients to compound differences, but with mutual damage and inconvenience to prorogue and increase them: not to discern how exceedingly better it is to be helpful and beneficial, than to be mischievous and troublesome to one another. How foolishly and unskilfully they judge, that think by unkind speech and harsh dealing to allay men's

distempers, alter their opinions, or remove their prejudices; as if they should attempt to kill by ministering nourishment, or to extinguish a flame by pouring oil upon it. How childish a thing it is eagerly to contend about trifles, for the superiority in some impertinent contest, for the satisfaction of some petty humour, for the possession of some inconsiderable toy; yea, how barbarous and brutish a thing it is, to be fierce and impetuous in the pursuit of things that please us, snarling at, biting, and tearing all competitors of our game, or opposers of our undertaking. But how divine and amiable, how worthy of human nature, of civil breeding, of prudent consideration it is, to restrain partial desires, to condescend to equal terms, to abate from rigorous pretences, to appease discords, and vanquish enmities by courtesy and discretion; like the best and wisest commanders, who by skilful conduct, and patient attendance upon opportunity, without striking of stroke, or shedding of blood, subdue their enemy.

3 How that peace with its near alliance and concomitants, its causes, and effects, love, meekness, gentleness, and patience, are in sacred writ reputed the genuine fruits of the Holy Spirit, issues of divine grace, and offsprings of heavenly wisdom; producing like themselves a goodly progeny of righteous deeds. But that emulation, hatred, wrath, variance, and strife derive their extraction from fleshly lust, hellish craft, or beastly folly; propagating themselves also into a like ugly brood of wicked works. For so saith St James, *If ye have bitter zeal and strife in your hearts, glory not, nor be deceived untruly* (καὶ μὴ ψεύδεσθε κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας): *this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly,*

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Gal. v. 22.

James iii.  
14—18;  
iv. 1.



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*sensual, and devilish: for where emulation and strife are, there is tumult and every naughty thing (ἀκαταστασία καὶ πᾶν φαῦλον πρᾶγμα): but the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, obsequious, (εὐπειθής) full of mercy (or beneficence) and of good fruits, without partiality and dissimulation: and the fruit of righteousness is sowed in peace to those that make peace; and from whence are wars and quarrels among you? are they not hence, even from your lusts, that war in your members? Likewise, He loveth transgression that loveth strife; and, A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes, saith Solomon. That the most wicked and miserable of creatures is described by titles denoting enmity and discord<sup>r</sup>: The hater (Satan), The enemy (Ἐχθρὸς ἄνθρωπος), The accuser (Ὁ κατήγορος), The slanderer (Ὁ διάβολος), The destroyer (Ὁ ἀπολλύων), the furious dragon, and mischievously treacherous snake: and how sad it is to imitate him in his practices, to resemble him in his qualities. But that the best, most excellent, and most happy of Beings delights to be styled, and accordingly to express himself, The God of love, mercy, and peace; and his blessed Son to be called, and to be, The Prince of peace, the great Mediator, Reconciler, and Peacemaker; who is also said from on high to have visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; and to guide our feet in the ways of peace. That, lastly, no devotion is pleasing, no oblation acceptable to God<sup>s</sup>,*

Prov. xvii.  
19; xviii.  
6.

Matt. xiii.  
28.  
Rev. xii. 9,  
10;  
ix. 11.

2 Cor. xiii.  
11.  
Phil. iv. 9.  
1 Thess. v.  
23.  
2 Thess. iii.  
16.  
Isai. ix. 6.  
Luke i. 79.

<sup>r</sup> Qui posuit in cœlo bellum, in paradiso fraudem, odium inter primos fratres.—Aug.

<sup>s</sup> Ἀντιδίκος, 1 Pet. v. 8. Ἀνθρωποκτόνος, Joh. viii. 44.

<sup>s</sup> Χαίρει γὰρ συμφωνία τῶν λογικῶν ζώων ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ ἐκτρέπεται τὴν διαφωνίαν.—Orig. con. Cels. Lib. viii. p. 424.

conjoined with hatred, or proceeding from an unreconciled mind: for, *If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath caught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift,* saith our Saviour.

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Matt. v.  
23, 24.

I close up all with this corollary: that if we must live lovingly and peaceably with all men, then much more are we obliged to do so with all Christians: to whom by nearer and firmer bands of holy alliance we are related; by more precious communions in faith and devotion we are endeared; by more peculiar and powerful obligations of divine commands, sacramental vows, and formal professions we are engaged: our spiritual brethren, members of the same mystical body, temples of the same Holy Spirit, servants of the same Lord, subjects of the same Prince, professors of the same truth, partakers of the same hope, heirs of the same promise, and candidates of the same everlasting happiness.

*Now Almighty God, the most good and beneficent Maker, gracious Lord, and merciful Preserver of all things, infuse into our hearts those heavenly graces of meekness, patience, and benignity; grant us and his whole church, and all his creation to serve him quietly here, and in a blissful rest to praise and magnify him for ever: to whom, with his blessed Son, the great Mediator and Prince of peace, and with his holy Spirit, the everflowing spring of all love, joy, comfort, and peace, be all honour, glory, and praise. And,*

466    *Of a peaceable Temper and Carriage.*

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*The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be among you, and remain with you for ever.    Amen.*

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## SERMON XXXIII.

### OF DOING ALL IN THE NAME OF CHRIST.

COLOSS. III. 17.

*And whatsoever ye do in word, or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

**W**HATSOEVER ye do in word, or deed: A SERM.  
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duty we see the apostle enjoins us of a large extent, and therefore surely of a great importance; indeed of an universal concernment; such as must go along with, must run through all our words and all our actions. We are therefore much obliged, and much concerned to attend thereto, and to practise it carefully. But first we must understand what it is; the doing whereof depends upon understanding the sense of that phrase, doing in the name of Jesus being somewhat ambiguous, and capable of divers meanings; which both in common use and in holy scripture we find it to bear, different according to the variety of matters or occasions to which it is applied; most of which are comprehended, and, as it were, complicated in that general one, according to which we may be said to do that in another person's name, which we do with any kind of reference or regard to him; such as our relations, or our obligations to that person do require; and the particular nature of the action doth admit. And according to this acception I

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conceive it safest and best to interpret St Paul's meaning here, supposing it to comprehend all the more special and restrained meanings of this phrase, duly applicable to the present matter; of which meanings I shall endeavour in order to propound the chief; and, together, both to unfold and to inculcate the several respective branches of this duty: yet first of all rejecting one or two, which cannot well be applied to this purpose.

To do in another's name doth sometime denote the assuming another's person, or pretending to be the same with him, the very He. So, *Many shall come in my name*, prophesied our Saviour, *saying, I am Christ*: to do thus in Jesus's name, is the part of an Antichrist and an impostor. That sense therefore hath nothing to do here.

Again; to do in another's name, doth often imply doing *alterius loco*, or *vice*; in another's name, or stead, as a deputy, or substitute; representing the person, or supplying the office of another. So did the prophets come, and speak in God's name; what they declared, or enjoined, being therefore said to be declared and enjoined by God himself; *I spake unto you, rising up early, and speaking*, (viz. by the prophets, whom he sent, and who are said to come and speak in his name). And thus the apostles spake in Christ's name: *We are ambassadors for Christ; we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled*. Thus also princes govern, and magistrates execute justice in God's name; whence they are styled gods, as being his lieutenants, administering that judgment which belongs originally and principally to him. Now for this sense, neither is it so proper, or convenient here; it agree-

Jer. vii. 13;  
xxvi. 5;  
xiv. 14.  
James v.  
10.  
John v. 43.  
Matt. x.  
40.  
Ezra v. 1.  
2 Cor. v.  
20.  
Rom. xiii.  
4.  
Deut. i. 17.

ing only to some particular persons, and to some peculiar actions of them; insomuch that others presuming to act, according to that manner or kind, in Jesus's name, shall thereby become usurpers and deceivers. We (and to us all this precept is directed) shall heinously transgress our duty, doing any thing thus in his name, without his letters of credence; without being specially called or sent, or being duly by him authorized thereto.

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These and such like senses the present matter doth not well admit: the rest that suit thereto I shall with some distinction in order represent.

I. To do in another's name sometime doth signify to do it out of affection or honour to another; for another's sake, because we love or esteem him; *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι* being equivalent to *ἐνεκα τοῦ ὀνόματος*, and *διὰ τὸ ὄνομα*. Thus it is said, *Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name; because ye are Christ's, (is added by way of interpretation, that is, out of respect to Christ, because of your relation to him,) shall not lose his reward.* And thus surely we ought to do every thing in Jesus's name: all our actions ought to proceed from a principle of grateful love and reverence towards our gracious Redeemer. *Let all your actions be done in charity*, saith the apostle; if in charity to our neighbour, then much more in love to him, for whose sake we are especially bound to love our neighbour. Upon any undertaking, or applying ourselves to action, we should so reflect thereupon, as to consider, whether that we are going about be apt to please him, and conducive to his honour; if so, remembering what he hath done and suffered for us, (what excellent blessings he hath purchased

Compare  
Mark ix.  
41.  
Matt. x.  
41; xxiv.  
9; xix. 29.  
Matt. xviii.  
5.

1 Cor. xvi.  
14.

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for us, what exceeding benefits he hath conferred upon us,) we should, out of love and respect to him, readily perform it ; but if it otherwise appear displeasing or dishonourable to him, we should, from the same principles, carefully decline it The duty is certain, and the reason thereof evident ; for inducement to the practice thereof, observe St Paul's example<sup>a</sup>; who thus represents himself in the main employment of his life acting, *The love of Christ constrains us : judging this, that he died for all, that they who live might not live to themselves, but to him that died and rose for them*: the love of Christ, begot and maintained by a consideration of his great benefits conferred on him, was the spring that set St Paul on work, that excited and urged him forward to action. Thus doing, we shall do in Jesus's name ; but if we act out of love to ourselves, (to promote our own interests, to gratify our own desires, to procure credit or praise to ourselves,) we act only in our own names, and for our own sakes ; not in the name, or for the sake of Jesus.

2 Cor. v.  
14, 15.  
  
1 Thess. ii.  
6.  
Tit. i. 11.  
1 Pet. v. 2.  
Phil. i. 15.  
Matt. xxiii.  
5.

John vii.  
18; viii.  
54; x. 25;  
v. 43, 36;  
vi. 28; ix.  
3, 4.

II. To do in another's name implies doing, chiefly, for the interest or advantage of another, upon another's behalf or account, as the servants or factors of another. For, when the business is another's, and the fruit or benefit emergent belong to another, he that prosecutes that business may well be, and is commonly, supposed to act in that other's name. Thus our Saviour is in St John's Gospel expressed to come, to speak, to act, in God's name ; because he did God's business, (the work which God gave him to accomplish,) and entirely

<sup>a</sup> Φιλοτιμούμεθα εὐάρεστοι αὐτῷ εἶναι.—2 Cor. v. 9.

sought the glory of God, as he there himself often SERM. XXXIII.  
 avouches and professes. And thus, in imitation  
 of him, ought we also to do all things in his name;  
 remembering that we are not our own men, but  
 the servants of Jesus, (servants to him not only 1 Cor. vi. 19; vii. 23.  
 by nature, as to our Maker and Preserver, but by  
 purchase, as to our Redeemer, who bought us with Heb. ix. 12.  
 the greatest price; and by compact also, we having 1 Pet. i. 18.  
 freely undertaken his service, and expecting wages Rom. xiv. 8, 9.  
 from him,) that we have therefore no business  
 or employment properly our own, but that all  
 our business is (or should be) to serve him, and  
 promote his glory; *Whether we eat or drink, or* 1 Cor. x. 31.  
*whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of*  
*our Lord.* Whatever, I say, we do, we therefore  
 should perform it with this formal reference, as it  
 were, toward Jesus, as his servants, from consci-  
 ence of the duty we owe to him; with intention  
 therein to serve him; in expectation of reward  
 only from him. So doth St Paul (in prosecution  
 of this same precept) beneath in this chapter  
 enjoin us, that, *Whatever we do, we perform it* Col. iii. 23, 24.  
*heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing*  
*(or considering) that from the Lord we shall receive*  
*the recompense of the inheritance; for that we serve*  
*the Lord Christ.* In like manner, elsewhere, he  
 teaches us to do what we do, *Not as pleasers of* Eph. vi. 6, 9.  
*men, (not upon any inferior accounts,) but as ser-*  
*vants of Christ, knowing and considering that we*  
*have a Master in heaven.* But,

III. Doing in another's name imports fre-  
 quently doing by the appointment and command,  
 or by the commission and authority of another.

*Ἐν ποίᾳ δυνάμει, ἢ ἐν ποίῳ ὀνόματι, By what power* Acts iv. 7.



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or in what name have ye done these things? say the high priests to the apostles; that is, who did appoint or authorize you to do thus? Their answer was ready; *In the name of Jesus*, who had sent, commissioned, and commanded them to preach and propagate that doctrine. And thus we are also bound to do all things in the name of Jesus, regulating all our actions by his law; conforming our whole lives to his will; acting, not only out of good principles, (principles of love and conscience,) but according to right rules; the rules of his word and example, which he hath declared and prescribed to us: for what is done beside his warrant and will, cannot be rightly esteemed done in his name; will not so be avowed or accepted by him; no unjust or impious action will he, upon any terms, countenance or patronise. It was once a famous saying, *All mischief begins in nomine Domini*; and much surely, more than one way, hath been done under the like notion or pretence: but this will not serve to excuse the doing of that, in the day of final reckoning for our actions. For, *There will be many*, we are taught, *that shall in that day*, by specious professions of having done this or that in Christ's name, veil their transgressions and their neglects of duty, saying, *Lord, Lord, have we not in thy name prophesied, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful things?* who yet, our Lord himself assures us, shall have this reply made to them, *I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity*. There will be those that shall claim acquaintance with Christ in such terms; *Lord, we have eaten and drank before thee; and thou hast taught in our streets*; whom yet

Acts iv. 10.

John v. 36,  
37, 43; xiv.  
14; xvii. 18.  
Luke xxiv.

47.

2 Cor. v.

20.

1 Cor. vi.

11.

2 Thess. iii.

6.

John xvi.

2.

Matt. vii.

22.

ver. 23.

Luke xiii.

26.

our Lord will disclaim with a, *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.* It is not, we see, prophesy-  
 ing in Christ's name, (or preaching about him,) nor frequent attendance upon those who do so, nor speaking much or hearing much concerning him ; it is not having great gifts or endowments conferred by Christ, (not even so great as that of working miracles ;) it is not familiar converse with Christ, or making frequent addresses to him, that can sanctify all a man's actions, or so entitle them to the name of Christ, as to secure his person from being disavowed and rejected by Christ ; it is only the conforming all our actions to his holy laws, that can assure us to be acknowledged and accepted by him. This I could wish they would consider, who seem, by such pretences, to commend or excuse their actions, although otherwise irregular and plainly contrary to the laws of Christ ; such as those of being meek and charitable toward all men ; living peaceably ourselves, and endeavouring to promote peace among others ; abstaining from rash and hard censures, from reviling and defaming others ; paying reverence and obedience to superiors ; and the like laws of Christ, not only express and manifest, but even of the highest rank and consequence among them ; being mainly conducing to that which our Lord especially tenders, the public welfare and benefit of mankind ; the violation whereof cannot be justified by pretending any special regard whatever to Christ, or any collateral performances done, whether truly or seemingly, in his name. We do but deceive ourselves, if we conceit, that, because we think much, or speak much of Jesus, or have a zeal for something good, all our actions are done

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ver. 27.

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in his name : no ; it only can be justly impressed upon, can warrant and sanctify actions truly good and agreeable to his law ; it were an abuse and forgery to do it, like stamping the king's name or image on counterfeit metal ; upon brass or tin, instead of gold or silver. Good intention and good principles are indeed, as it were, the form and soul of good actions ; but their being just and lawful are the body and matter of them ; necessarily also concurring to their essence and integrity ; they cannot subsist without it, but must pass, as it were, for ghosts and shadows. We are therefore concerned, in all our doings, to have an especial regard to Christ's law as their rule ; that will render them capable of Christ's name, and denominate them Christian.

IV. Hereto we may add, that what we do in imitation of Jesus, and in conformity to his practice, (that living rule and copy proposed to us,) we may be said peculiarly to do in his name. As a picture useth to bear his name whom it was made to represent, and whom it resembles ; so if we set Christ's example before us, and endeavour to transcribe it ; if our life, in the principal lineaments of sanctity and goodness, do resemble his holy life ; they may well bear his name. But if our practice be unlike and unsuitable to his, we cannot affix his name thereto without great presumption and abuse ; such as would be committed, if to a draught of foul hue and ugly features we should attribute the name of some most handsome and goodly person of high worth and quality. To do thus in Jesus's name (with such a regard to him) is a duty often prescribed to us, not only as relating to some cases

Eph. v. 1, 2.  
1 Cor. xi. 1.  
John xv.  
12, 13, 14.  
Heb. xii. 2.  
John xiii.  
15.  
Phil. ii. 5.

and actions, (as when his charity, his patience, his humility, his meekness, are signally commended to our imitation,) but generally, *He that saith he abideth in him ought as he walked, so himself also to walk*; that is, whoever professes himself a Christian ought to conform the whole tenor of his conversation to that of Jesus; to endeavour in every imitable perfection to resemble him. So that whenever we undertake any action, we should do well to look upon this pattern; thus, as it were, examining and inquiring of ourselves: What did my Master in this or the like case? Do I do the same thing, do I act from the same principles, do I proceed in the same manner as he did? Am I herein his disciple and follower? If so, in his name let me go on cheerfully; if not, let me forbear. Doing thus will not be only according to our duty, but an especial help and furtherance of good practice.

V. To do in another's name doth sometimes import doing by any power derived or virtue imparted by another; for that a thing so done may be imputed, should be ascribed to that other. So, *Through thee, saith the Psalmist, will we push down our enemies; in thy name will we throw down those that hate us; (through thee and in thy name signify the same thing).* So did the apostles cast out devils, and perform their other miracles, in Jesus's name, (*Διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος*, *By his name*, it is sometime expressed,) that is, by a divine virtue imparted from him. To this I add another acception, scarce different (at least as to our purpose) from that, according to which doing in another's name signifies doing it in trust or confidence reposed upon another, with expectation of aid, or hope of good

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1 Pet. ii.

21.  
1 John ii.

6.

Psal. xlv.  
5; lxxxix.

24.  
Matt. vii.  
22.

Mark ix.  
38.

Acts iii. 6;  
iv. 10, 30.

John xvii.  
12.

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2 Chron.  
xiv. 11.

1 Sam.  
xvii. 45.

Acts iii. 16.

Hab. i. 16.

success from another. So, *We rest on thee*, said good king Asa, *and in thy name we go against this multitude*; in thy name, that is, hoping for assistance and success from thee. And thus it is said, that David went out against Goliath in the name of the Lord of hosts; that is, confiding in God's help, as his only weapon and defence: thus also did the holy apostles work their miracles in Jesus's name: 'Επὶ τῇ πίστει τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, *By faith in his name*, saith St Peter, *his name hath made this man strong*; that is, we did only trust in his divine power, and it was that power of his which restored that weak person to his strength. And thus also is it our duty to do all things in our Saviour's name; with faith and hope in him; wholly relying upon him for direction and assistance; expecting from him only a blessing and happy issue of our undertakings. What we do in confidence of our wisdom or ability, or in affiance upon the help of any other person or thing, we do in our own name, or in the name of that thing (or that person) in whom we so confide; to ourselves, or to such auxiliaries, we shall be ready to attribute the success, and to render the glory of the performance; glorying in our own arm, and sacrificing to our net. But what we undertake, only depending upon our Lord for ability and success, may therefore bear his name, because our faith derives the power from him, which enables us happily to perform it; so that the performance may truly be attributed to him, and to him we shall be apt to ascribe it. And thus, I say, we are certainly obliged to do every thing in his name, (in his name alone,) retaining a constant sense both of our own infirmity, and of the impo-

tendency of all other created things, and consequently SERM. XXXIII.  
a total diffidence both in ourselves and in them; but reposing all our trust in the direction and assistance of our All-wise and Almighty Lord; of Jesus, *To whom all power in heaven and earth is given*; (who indeed had it originally by nature as God; but also further hath acquired it by desert and purchase;) into whose hands all things are given; and all things are put under his feet; who hath obtained this power in design to use it for our good; and is thereby always ready to help us in our need, if we have recourse unto him, and rely upon him; making him what St Paul styles him, *Our hope*; our only hope; renouncing all other confidences not subordinate to him. To do so is a duty evidently grounded as well upon the reason of the thing, as upon the will and command of God; to do otherwise is no less a palpable folly, than a manifest injury to God. For, in truth, neither have we nor any other created thing any power, other than such as he is pleased freely to dispense<sup>b</sup>; and which is not continually both for its being and its efficacy subject to him, so that he may at his pleasure subtract it, or obstruct its effect: *No king is saved by the multitude of an host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength; a horse is a vain thing for safety*: whence it is plain, that we cannot upon any created power, ground a solid assurance of success in any undertaking<sup>c</sup>; it will be a leaning upon a broken reed,

Matt. xxviii. 18.  
John iii. 35; xiii. 3;  
xvii. 2.  
Heb. i. 2;  
ii. 8.  
Eph. i. 22.  
1 Cor. xv. 27.  
Phil. ii. 9.  
Rev. v. 12.

1 Tim. i. 1.

Ps. xxxiii.

17.

Isai. xxxvi. 6.

<sup>b</sup> *The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.* Eccl. ix. 11. *By strength shall no man prevail.* 1 Sam. ii. 9. Psal. cxlvi. 3; xlv. 3.

<sup>c</sup> *Beside me there is no Saviour.* Isai. xliii. 11. Hos. xiii. 4, 10. Psal. cvi. 21. Jer. xiv. 8.

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(which cannot support us, and will pierce our hands,) both a vain and a mischievous confidence ; that will abuse us, bringing both disappointment and guilt upon us ; the guilt of wronging our Lord many ways, by arrogating to ourselves, or assigning to others, what he only doth truly deserve, and what peculiarly of right belongs to him : withdrawing the same from him ; implying him unable or unwilling to assist us, and do us good ; neglecting to use that strength which he so dearly purchased and so graciously tenders ; so disappointing him, and defeating, as it were, his purposes of favour and mercy towards us. On the other side, trusting only upon our Saviour, we act wisely and justly, gratefully and officiously ; for that, in doing so, we build our hopes upon most sure grounds ; upon a wisdom that cannot be deceived ; upon a strength that cannot be withstood ; upon a goodness that hath no limits ; upon a fidelity that can never fail. For that we act with an humility and sobriety of mind suitable to our condition, and to the reason of things ; for that we thereby declare our good opinion of him, as only able, and very willing to do us good ; for that we render him his just honour and due ; we comply with his earnest desires, we promote his gracious designs of mercy and kindness toward us. Hence it is that every where in holy scripture God so highly commends, so greatly encourages this duty of trusting alone in him ; that he so ill resents, and so strongly deters from the breach or omission thereof: *Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord : for he shall be like the heath in*

Psal. cxlvi.  
5 ; xl. 4 ;  
xliv. 6 ;  
xxxiii. 18 ;  
cxlvii. 11 ;  
xxxiv. 22 ;  
cxxxv. 1 ;  
xxxi. 19 ;  
lxi. 4 ; xci.  
4 ; cxviii.  
8 ; lxxviii.  
22 ; cxii. 7.  
Isai. li. 5.  
lvii. 13 ; l.  
7 ; xxvi. 3.  
Jer. xiv. 8 ;  
xvii. 5—8.

*the desert, and shall not see when good cometh ; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabited. Blessed is the man who trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is : for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green ; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit :* thus in that place, thus in innumerable others, we are threatened not only with disappointment and bad success in our undertakings, but with severe punishment, if we betake ourselves to other succours, and neglect or distrust, or, in so doing, desert God ; but are encouraged, not only with assurance of prosperous success, but of additional rewards, if entirely in our proceedings we depend upon and adhere to God. Thus we should do in all, even our most common and ordinary affairs, which no less than the rest are subject to his power, and governed by his care. For you know how St James doth reprehend it as a piece of naughty boasting and arrogance, to say, *The morrow we will go to this city, and stay there a year, and trade, and gain :* instead of saying, *If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that ;* that is, to resolve upon, undertake, or prosecute any affair, without submission to God's will, and dependence on his providence : but especially we ought, in matters and actions more spiritual, to practise this duty ; for that to the performing of these we have of ourselves a peculiar impotence and unfitness ; needing therefore a more especial assistance from our Lord ; that the success of them more particu-

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Matt. x.  
29, 30.

James iv.  
13.



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If it be a folly and a crime to think we can do anything without God, it is much more so to think we can do any thing good without him ; it is an arrogance, it is an idolatry, it is a sacrilege much more vain and wicked to do so<sup>d</sup>. To imagine that we can, by the force of our own reason and resolution, achieve any of those most high and hard enterprises, to which by the rules of virtue and piety we are engaged ; that we can, by our own conduct and prowess, encounter and withstand, defeat and vanquish those so crafty, so mighty enemies of our salvation, (our own fleshly desires, the menaces and allurements of the world, the sleights and powers of darkness,) is much a worse presumption, than, in other affairs of greatest difficulty, to expect success without the divine assistance and blessing, than, in other most dangerous battles, to think we can by  
 Ps. xliv. 6. our own bow and by our own spear save ourselves ; that we can obtain victory otherwise than from his hand and disposal, who is the Lord of hosts. Reason tells us, and experience also shews, and our  
 John xv. 5. Saviour hath expressly said it, *That* (in these things) *without him* (without his especial influence and blessing) *we can do nothing* ; he tells us, that we are but branches, inserted into him ; so that, without continually drawing sap from him, we can have no life or vigour spiritual. The wisest and best of men have, by their practice, taught us to acknowledge so much ; to depend wholly upon him,

<sup>d</sup> Οὐτε γὰρ ἀνθρώπινόν τι ἄνευ τῆς ἐπὶ τὰ θεῖα συναναφορᾶς εἰ πράξεις.—M. Ant. III. § 13.

to ascribe all to him in this kind. *Why, say St Peter and St John, do ye wonder at this? or why gaze ye upon us, as if by our own power, or piety, we had made this man walk?—His name, (the name of Jesus,) through faith in his name, hath made this man strong:* that acknowledgment indeed concerns a miraculous work; but spiritual works are in reality no less, they requiring as much or more of virtue supernatural, or the present interpositions of God's hand to effect them; they make less show without, but need as great efficacy within: so our Saviour, it seems, did imply, when he said, *He that believes in me, the works that I do he shall do, and greater works than these.* SERM. XXXIII. Acts iii. 12, 16. John xiv. 12. Every good and faithful man doth not work miracles; yet somewhat greater, it seems, by the grace of Christ he performs: however, to these St Paul referred, when he affirmed, *I can do all things in Christ that strengtheneth me;* nothing was so hard that he feared to attempt, that he despaired to master and go through with by the help of Christ; and, *Not, saith he again, that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God:* he was as sensible of his own inability, as he was confident in the gracious help of Christ. Thus should we do all things in the name of Jesus; and it is not only a duty to do it, but it may be a great encouragement to us, that we are capable of doing it; a great comfort to consider, that in all honest undertakings we have so ready and so sure an aid to second and further us in them; confiding in which, nothing is so difficult, but we may easily accomplish<sup>e</sup>; (a grain of

<sup>e</sup> Οὐδὲν ἀδυνατήσει ὑμῖν. Matt. xvii. 20.

**SERM.**    faith will be able to remove mountains;) nothing  
**XXXIII.**    is so hazardous, but we may safely venture on;  
 Matt. xvii. (walking on the sea, treading upon serpents and  
 20; xxi. 21. scorpions, daring all the power of the enemy). In  
 Luke xvii. 6. his name we may, if our duty or good reason calls  
 Matt. xiv. 29. us forth, how small and weak so ever, how desti-  
 Luke x. 19. tute soever of defensive arms, or weapons offensive,  
 naked and unarmed, with a sling and a stone, go  
 out against the biggest and best armed Philistine,  
 nothing doubting of victory: our weakness itself,  
 if we be humbly conscious and sensible thereof,  
 will be an advantage to us, as it was to St Paul;  
 2 Cor. xii. 9. to all effects and purposes, the grace of our Lord  
 will be sufficient for us, if we apply it, and trust  
 therein. But further,

VI. To do in another's name may denote, to  
 do it with such regard to another, that we acknow-  
 ledge (that, I say, we heartily and thankfully ac-  
 knowledge) our hope of prospering in what we do;  
 our expectation of acceptance, favour, or reward to  
 be grounded on him; that they are procured by his  
 merits and means, are bestowed only for his sake.  
 John xiv. 13; xv. 16; Thus our Saviour bids us to offer our prayers in his  
 xvi. 23, 24. name; that is, representing unto God his merito-  
 rious performances in our behalf, as the ground of  
 our access to God, of our hope to obtain from him  
 Eph. v. 20; what we request. So also we are enjoined to  
 iii. 21. give thanks in his name; that is, with persuasion  
 and acknowledgment, that only in respect to him  
 we become capable to receive or enjoy any good  
 thing; that, in effect, all the blessings by divine  
 mercy vouchsafed us have been procured by him for  
 us, are through him conveyed unto us. And thus  
 also we should do all things in the name of Jesus,

offering all our deeds to God, as sacrifices and SERM. XXXIII. services unworthy of acceptance, both in themselves, and as proceeding from us; but pleasing and acceptable to God only for his sake. We should do well, upon all occasions, to remember our natural condition, and the general state of mankind; such as it was before he did undertake, such as it would have continued still, had he not undertaken for it; that our race hath forfeited and Rom. iii. 23; xi. 32. Gal. iii. 22. was fallen from God's favour; having injured him beyond all power of making him any reparation or satisfaction; that thence it was secluded from all means and hopes apparent of happiness, was exposed and tended downright unto misery; that we consequently had no ground to hope that God (from whom, no less in mind and in deed, than by reason of our guilt and state of condemnation, we were estranged) would in kindness bestow any good upon us, or from us accept favourably any thing we should do. But that, by our Saviour's performances, the case is altered; he, by his entire obedience, having so pleased God by his patient submission to God's will, having so appeased his anger and satisfied his justice, that God is not only reconciled, but hath an especial favour, bears an earnest good-will toward us. That now the good things we possess, we may truly esteem as Acts iii. 26. Eph. ii. 17. blessings, and enjoy them with real comfort, as proceeding from mercy and kindness; now what we honestly endeavour, we may hope shall please God; now we have a free access to God, and may cheerfully present our sacrifices of duty and devotion, with a full persuasion that they shall be accepted. Eph. iii. 12. But all this happiness, all these favours and privi-

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Eph. i. 6.

Col. iii. 17.

Eph. i. 3, 6.

Luke xvii.  
10.

leges, we must always remember to come from the continued procurement and mediation of the Beloved; so as ever to be ready to acknowledge it, and to return our thanks therefore. To this sense that our apostle here had an especial regard, the words immediately following imply—*Doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him*; that is, in all things we do, taking occasion to render thanks to God, as for his sake being merciful and bountiful to us; bestowing upon us the good we enjoy, blessing our endeavours, accepting our performances. We must not conceit, that any regard, any mercy, any favour, any reward is due to us in equity, is in effect conferred upon us, upon our own personal score; (for, how mean things are we in comparison of his greatness; how vile and filthy things must we appear to his most pure and all-discerning eyes; how unworthy of his regard and of his affection must we needs take ourselves to be, if we do but well consider, and are acquainted with ourselves!) but that, *In him* (i. e. for his sake, and by his means) *God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings*; *In him ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς*, *God hath favoured*, and cast his grace upon us; valuing us notwithstanding all our imperfections; loving us, notwithstanding all the spots with which we are defiled; notwithstanding all the offences we have committed; for the relation and alliance we have to Jesus. Nor must we look on our services (the best we are able to perform) as in themselves grateful or satisfactory: for all of them, if we mark them well, we shall find not only quite unprofitable to God, but very defective in many respects; for who can say he performs any thing

both in kind, in manner, in degree thoroughly right and good; with that ardency of love he owes to God, with that purity of intention, with that earnest vigour of spirit, with that undistractedness of mind, with which he should perform it? No; in all our flock we cannot pick out a sacrifice entire and unblemished; such as God requires, such as duty exacts of us. They need therefore (all our services need) to be commended and completed by the beloved Son's perfectly well-pleasing performances; they need to be cleansed and hallowed, by passing through the hands of our most holy and undefiled High Priest; to become sweet and savoury (or to receive that *ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας*, which St Paul speaks of) from being offered up in his censer. In fine, as all our actions should, in our intention, be works of Religion dedicated to God's service and honour; sacrifices, as it were, of gratitude and homage to God; so they ought all to be offered up in the name of Jesus. I add further,

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Heb. vii.  
26.

Eph. v. 2.  
Rev. viii.  
3, 5.

VII. Lastly, that to do in the name of Jesus may well imply doing with invocation of him: thus we may understand that place of St James, where the elders are advised to pray, and to anoint the sick in the Lord's name, for, to anoint them, imploring our Lord's blessing upon them, and upon those means used for their cure. And thus St Chrysostom expounds the words; do all in Jesus's name, *That is, saith he, imploring him for your helper in all things; always first praying to him, undertake your business*<sup>1</sup>. Doing thus, will indeed christen and consecrate our actions; for, *All things*,

James v.  
14.

1 Tim. iv.  
5.

<sup>1</sup> Αὐτὸν καλῶν βοηθὸν, ἐπὶ πάντων πρότερον αὐτῷ εὐχόμενος, ἅπτου τῶν πραγμάτων. Chrys. in locum. [Opp. Tom. iv. p. 139.]

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saith our apostle, *are sanctified by the word of God, and prayer*; that is, by God's blessing implored, and obtained by prayer; or, if God's word be there taken for his law, or revealed will, it is there signified, that our actions are not only sanctified by their lawfulness, or conformity to that good rule, God's declared will; but also by the invocation of his name; however, all our actions, it seems, are unhallowed and profane, if not accompanied with devotion<sup>s</sup>. That to do thus is our duty, appears  
<sup>1</sup> Thess. v. 17. by those frequent injunctions, *To pray incessantly,*  
 Luke xviii. *To pray always, To abide instantly in prayer*;  
<sup>1</sup> Rom. xii. which do not only import, that we should pray  
<sup>12</sup> Col. iv. 2. often, and continue with patience and earnestness in prayer; but that we should annex it to, or interpose it among all our actions, undertaking nothing (at least of consideration or moment) without it.  
 Luke xxi. 36. We should do it (our Saviour commands) *ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ*, that is, *On every occasion*: and St Paul  
 Eph. vi. 18. gives the same direction; *Praying*, says he, *ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ*, *on all opportunities, with all prayer and supplication in spirit*; (in spirit, that is, I take it, in our hearts at least, and with secret elevations of our mind, if not with our mouth and voice). And

<sup>s</sup> Δεῖ πάσης τῆς πράξεως προηγείσθαι τὴν προσευχήν.—Marc. Erem.

Μηδὲν μήτε ποιῶμεν μήτε λέγωμεν πρὶν ἢ τὸν Θεὸν καλέσαι καὶ παρακαλέσαι συνεφάσασθαι τῶν ἐν χερσὶν ἡμῶν ἀπάντων.—Chrys.

Τοῦτό γε δὴ πάντες ὅσοι καὶ κατὰ βραχὺ σωφροσύνης μετέχουσιν, ἐπὶ πάσῃ ὁρμῇ καὶ σμικροῦ καὶ μεγάλου πράγματος Θεὸν αἰεὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν καλοῦσιν.—Plato. Tim. [27. c.] Vide Ep. viii. [353. A. Ἔστω δὲ παντάπασιν μὲν εὐχή τις, ἀπὸ γὰρ θεῶν χρὴ πάντα ἀρχόμενον αἰεὶ λέγειν τε καὶ νοεῖν.] Cf. Epict. Diss. ii. 18. [29.]

Bene ac sapienter majores instituerunt, ut rerum agendarum, ita dicendi initium a precationibus capere; quod nihil rite, nihilque providenter homines, sine Deorum immortalium ope, consilio, honore auspicarentur.—Plin. Paneg. [Cap. i. 1.]

more explicitly elsewhere saith he, *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing (in all your affairs) by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.* And thus to do (to accompany all our undertakings with prayer) we are indeed concerned upon many accounts. We need God's direction (being our-  
selves very blind and ignorant) in the choice of what we attempt ; that our ends and designs may be good, conducive to God's honour and our own true advantage. For, as the prophet tells us, *The way of man is not in himself, neither is it in man that walketh to direct his steps ;* and, as the Wise Man adds, *Man's goings are of the Lord ; how then can a man understand his own way ?* (implying, since God only knows what is best for us, that we of ourselves, without his direction, know not what to do, whither to go). The holy Psalmist signifies the same in those words, (very encouraging to the practice of this duty,) *What man is he that feareth the Lord ? (that feareth him, that is, who worshippeth him, and seeketh his guidance,) him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.* We need also (being ourselves not only weak and infirm, but inconstant and unstable) God's assistance and upholding hand in the pursuance of our well-chosen designs, (that we may use the best means, and proceed in a straight course ; that we may persist upright and steady in our proceedings,) that which the Wise Man seems to call the establishing of our thoughts, and promises, as a consequence, upon our seeking God's assistance in our actions, and relying thereon ; *Commit, saith he, thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be*

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Phil. iv. 6,  
7.

Job xviii.

7.  
Isai. xxx. 1.

Hos. x. 6.

Prov. i. 25,

30.

Ps. cvi. 13;

xvi. 7;

lxxiii. 24;

cvii. 11.

Jer. x. 23.

Prov. xx.

24; xvi. 9.

Psal. xxv.

12.

Prov. xvi.

3.



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*established ; (thou shalt drive on thy good purposes steadily, without stumbling or falling ; at least irrecoverably). So the Psalmist assures us concerning*

Ps. xxxvii.  
23, 24, 31.

*a good man ; The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord ; none of his steps shall slide ; though he fall, he shall not utterly be cast down ; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.*

Ps. xxxvii.  
5 ; cxix. 5,  
133.

*We also further, as to the final success of our affairs, stand in need of God's blessing ; that he, upon whose will altogether depends the disposal of all events, should bestow a good issue unto our endeavours, that they prove not matter of discouragement or discomfort to us ; that which also the Psalmist assures us of obtaining, upon condition of our imploring and depending upon God for it : Commit thy way, saith he, unto the Lord ; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.*

Luke xi. 9,  
10.  
John xiv.  
13.  
Ps. ix. 10.

*We do thus need in all our affairs the direction, assistance, and blessing of our Lord ; but shall not have them without prayer : for the rule is, Ask and have, seek and find. Without asking, we are not likely to obtain those gifts ; without seeking, we must not hope to find those benefits from God. If we are so proud as to think we do not need them, or so negligent as not to mind them, or so distrustful of the divine power or goodness, that we imagine he cannot or will not afford them to us, we are like to be so unhappy as to want them. God expects from us, that we should, in whatever we do, acknowledge him : (it is the Wise Man's ex-*

Prov. iii. 6.

*pression, In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths :) acknowledge him as the only faithful guide and counsellor ; as the only sufficient helper and protector ; as the only free arbitrator and donor of good success. Nothing*

therefore is well done, which is not thus done : we cannot be satisfied in what we do ; we cannot hope for a comfortable end thereof ; we cannot expect a blessing from God, if we have refused, or if we have neglected the recommending our proceedings to his care. We can, I say, do nothing ; not eat, not sleep, not trade, not travel, not study with any true content, any reasonable security, any satisfactory hope, if we have not first humbly implored God's favour ; committing ourselves and our business into his hand, that hand which dispenseth all good, which alone can keep off all danger and mischief from us. *God shall send his angel before thee :* so did our father Abraham send his servant about his business ; having questionless before commended it to God by prayer. *God Almighty give you mercy before the man :* so did Jacob give his sons their despatches toward Egypt. In such a manner did we enter upon all our affairs, we could not but be full of hope, and void of care concerning them ; for that commonly we are so full of anxiety about the event of what we undertake, whence doth it arise, but from our neglect of this duty ? for, having committed our business into so sure a hand, how could we further be solicitous about it ? Had we, according to St Peter's advice, *Cast our care upon the Lord ;* or, *Cast our burden upon him,* (as the Psalmist exhorts us ;) had we duly sought and invoked him, *Who never faileth them that seek him, Who is nigh to all them that call upon him ;* we should not have such a load of troublesome care resting upon us ; our hearts would be light and free as to all these things ; we should be secure, that nothing very bad or disastrous could befall

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Gen. xxiv.

7.

Gen. xliii.

14.

1 Pet. v. 7.

Ps. lv. 22.

Ps. ix. 10.

Old Transl.

lxx. 4.

Psal. cxlv.

18 ; cxii.

7, 8.

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Isai. xxvi.  
3.

Phil. iv. 6.

us ; we should experience it true, what the prophet affirms in that prayer or psalm to God ; *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.* Be careful for nothing, St Paul bids us ; but in every thing let your requests be made known to God : if we perform the latter part, the former will naturally be consequent thereon. Thus, in the last place, should we do all things in the name of Jesus, (upon all occasions praying to him, or, which is all one, to God in his name,) which that we may do (that we are allowed and encouraged to do it) is also a privilege, and an advantage unvaluable.

In so many ways and particular respects may we and ought we to perform all we do in the name of Jesus : we should do every thing out of grateful affection and respect to him, as our chief principle : every thing as his servants, aiming especially at the pleasing of him and promoting his honour, as our principal end ; every thing according to his will and commandment, as our constant rule ; every thing after his example, as our best pattern ; every thing in confidence of his gracious assistance and blessing, as our only strength and support ; every thing with hope of acceptance purely upon his account ; every thing with thankful sense and acknowledgment to God for the mercies and favours conveyed unto us by his means, conferred upon us for his sake ; every thing with humble invocation of him, or with prayer to God in his name : in sum, every thing with a due and proper regard had to him ; so that he be not passed over or left out in any thing we undertake ; but come always into consideration, according as our relations to him and our obligations to him do require.

In the performances of which duties the life indeed of our Religion (of all our good practice, of all our devotion) doth consist. SERM.  
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To all this I shall only subjoin the mention of one general duty, implied in all and each of those we have propounded, which is this :

VIII. That our Lord Jesus should be frequently (and in a manner continually ; always, as to the habitual disposition of our souls, actually upon all fit occasions) present to our minds and thoughts. This, I say, is plainly implied in the former duties. For, how is it possible we should perform all our actions (yea, utter all our words) with any sort of regard to him, if we seldom think of him ? Such is the nimbleness and activity of our minds, that it is feasible enough to do thus ; and, in respect to other objects, we commonly experience it done ; for, *Animus est ubi amat* ; whatever we affect, our mind, however otherwise employed, will be thinking on it ; it is hard to restrain our thoughts from it : (the covetous man's heart will be among his bags ; the voluptuous man's mind will be in his dishes ; the studious person will be musing on his notions, do he what he can :) why then may we not as well, as often direct our minds toward our Lord, and mix the remembrance of him with all other employments or entertainments of our thoughts ? To do so is surely very requisite, and very expedient toward our good practice. Things far distant, or long absent, can have small efficacy, or influence : it is so, we see, in natural, and it is no less so in moral causalities ; wherein representation to the fancy and memory have a force answerable to that, which

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real conjunction and approximation have in nature. As the heat and light of the sun, the further he goes, and the longer he stays from us, do the more, proportionably, decrease ; so, according to our less frequently and less seriously thinking upon any object, our affection and our respect thereto decay. If therefore we desire, according to our duty, to maintain in our hearts such dispositions (due affection and due reverence) toward Jesus ; if we intend to suit our actions accordingly with due regard to him ; we should, in order to those purposes, apply this so necessary and useful mean, of frequently bending our minds toward him ; the doing of which, in likelihood, will conduce much to the sanctifying our affections, and to the governing our actions in a constant performance of our duty. For we can hardly sure (admitting we do seriously believe him to be such as we profess to believe him) with any competent attention think of him, but that thought will be apt to restrain us from doing ill, to incite us to do well ; since together with that thought, some of his excellent perfections, some of our principal relations, and some of our great obligations to him, (each of which hath much virtue and force to those purposes,) will interpose and represent themselves. Frequently thinking of him, we shall sometimes

Acts x. 38. apprehend him with incessant toil labouring in the service of God, and in promoting the welfare of men ; sometimes we shall imagine him undergoing all kind of contumelies and bitter pains, suffering by the cruel hands and tongues of spiteful men ; we shall, as it were, behold him bleeding under the scourge, and hanging upon the cross for our sakes.

Sometimes he will appear to our minds crowned with majesty, reigning in sovereign power and glory, having all things in subjection under his feet; sometimes also he will be represented as our Judge, before whose tribunal we must all shortly stand, and be obliged to render an account of all our doings: which thoughts passing through our minds, will be apt to make some impression upon our hearts, to have some influence upon our actions. For, can that most amiable and most venerable idea of a person so entirely pure and holy, so meek and humble, so full of benignity and charity toward all men, (particularly toward ourselves,) be otherwise than apt to beget some especial love and reverence toward him; than incline us strongly to do well, yea, than teach us what and how we should do so, in conformity to such a pattern set before us? it occurring to our thoughts, that he is our Lord and Master, (who made us, and maintains us; who purchased us to himself, and redeemed us from miserable slavery by his own heart-blood;) how can it fail to raise in us some awe, some sense of duty toward him? Will not the apprehension of what he did and what he suffered for us powerfully mind us, that, according to all justice and equity, in all ingenuity and gratitude, we are bound to do only that which will please him? If we think of Jesus, when we are setting upon any action, shall we not thereupon be apt thus to interrogate ourselves? Shall I do otherwise than he did, or would have done, so rendering myself unlike or contrary to him? Shall I be so unfaithful to my glorious Master, as to disserve him, or to neglect his service? Shall I be

SERM. so unworthy toward my gracious Redeemer, my  
 XXXIII. best friend, my most bountiful benefactor, as to  
 disoblige him, to wrong him, to dishonour him, to  
 grieve him by thus doing? Shall I be so vain  
 and rash as to cross him who is my King, able to  
 control and subdue me; as to offend him who is  
 my Judge, resolved to condemn and punish me?  
 Shall I wilfully forfeit that friendship and favour  
 of his, upon which all my happiness doth depend?  
 Shall I procure his displeasure and enmity, from  
 which my utter ruin must inevitably follow? Such  
 considerations have a natural connection with our  
 frequent thinking upon, and the presence, as it  
 were, of our blessed Saviour to our minds; which,  
 therefore, may be commended to us as an excellent  
 instrument of bettering our hearts and our lives.

To conclude: Let us always remember, and  
 consider, that we are Christians, related unto  
 Christ Jesus, and called by his name, and as so,  
 in his name let us do all things:

*Lord of all power and might, who art the au-  
 thor and giver of all good things; graft in our hearts  
 the love of thy name, increase in us true religion,  
 nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great  
 mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ  
 our Lord.*

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## SERMON XXXIV.

### OF BEING IMITATORS OF CHRIST.

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I COR. IV. 16.

*I beseech you, be followers of me: or, I exhort you, be imitators of me\*.*

ST PAUL, by an impartial reflection upon his SERM.  
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heart and life, being well assured, that he by the divine Spirit was enlightened with a certain knowledge of all necessary truth, and endued with plentiful measures of divine grace; being conscious of a sincere zeal in himself to honour God, and benefit men; being satisfied, that with integrity he did suit his conversation to the dictates of a good conscience, to the sure rule of God's law, and to the perfect example of his Lord; that his intentions were pure and right, his actions warrantable, and the tenor of his life conspicuously blameless, doth upon all occasions (not out of any self-conceitedness, arrogance, or ostentation, from which he, by frequent acknowledgment of his own defects and his miscarriages, and by ascribing all the good he had or did to the grace and mercy of God, doth sufficiently clear himself; but from an earnest desire to glorify God, and edify his disciples) describe, and set forth his own practice, proposing it as a rule, pressing it upon them as an argument,

\* Παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς, μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε.



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an encouragement, an obligation to the performance of several duties. So by it he directeth and urgeth the Ephesians to a charitable compliance, or complaisance; a sweet and inoffensive demeanour toward other: *Give no offence*, saith he, *neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved: be ye followers of me:* so he guides and provokes the Philippians to endeavours of proficiency in grace, and the study of Christian perfection: *Nevertheless*, saith he to them, *whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing: brethren, be followers together of me, and mark such as walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* By the like instance and argument he moveth the Thessalonians to a sober and orderly conversation, to industry in their calling, to self-denial, and a generous disregard of private interest: *For yourselves*, saith he, *know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail day and night, that we might not be chargeable to any of you; not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example to you to follow us.* The same persons he commendeth, as having by this means been induced to a patient constancy in faith and good works: *Ye know*, saith he, *what manner of men we were among you for your sake: and ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction.* The practice of all virtue and goodness he also thus recommendeth under this rule and obliga-

1 Cor. x.  
32, 33; xi.  
1; iv. 16.

Phil. iii. 16,  
17.

2 Thess. iii.  
7, 8, 9.

1 Thess. i.  
5, 6.

tion; *Those things, which ye have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you.* Thus in our text (referring it to the context) he urgeth the Christians, his disciples at Corinth, to fidelity and diligence in the charges and affairs committed to them, to humility, patience, and charity; wherein he declareth himself to have set before them an evident and exact pattern. Which practice of St Paul doth chiefly teach us two things; that we be careful to give, and that we be ready to follow good example; the latter of which duties more directly and immediately agreeth to the intent of this place; and it therefore I shall only now insist upon: the subject and scope of my discourse shall be to shew, that it is our duty and concernment to regard the practices of good men, and to follow their example. To which purpose we may observe,

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Phil. iv. 9.

I That it is the manner of the apostles, upon all occasions, to inculcate this duty: we heard St Paul: hear St James: *Take, saith he, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction: Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy: and the Apostle to the Hebrews: We desire, saith he, that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises: and again: Wherefore seeing we are also compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the*

James v.  
10, 11.

Heb. vi. 11,  
12.

xii. 1.

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I Pet. iii.  
1, 6.

*sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. And St Peter: Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And wherever the eminent deeds of holy men are mentioned, it is done with an intimation at least, or tacit supposition, that we are obliged to follow their example.*

2 We may consider, that to this end (that we might have worthy patterns to imitate) the goodness of God hath raised up in all ages such excellent persons, furnishing them with rare endowments, and with continual influences of his grace assisting them, to this purpose, that they might not only instruct us with wholesome doctrine, but lead us also by good example in the paths of righteousness. For certainly what St Paul saith concerning the sins and punishments of bad men, is no less applicable to the virtuous deeds and happy examples of good men: *All these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

I Cor. x.  
11.

3 *They are written for our admonition: it was a special design of God's providence in recording and recommending to our regard the divine histories. They were not framed as monuments of a fruitless memory and fame to them; they were not proposed to us as entertainments of our curiosity, as objects of wonder, as matters of idle discourse; that unconcernedly we should gaze upon them, or talk about them, as children look on fine gays: but they are set before us, as copies to transcribe, as lights to guide us in our way to hap-*

piness<sup>b</sup>. So that if we will not ingratefully frustrate the intentions of divine Providence for our good, we must dispose ourselves to imitate those illustrious patterns of virtue and piety. SERM.  
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4 We may further consider, that, in the nature of the thing itself, good example is of singular advantage to us, as being apt to have a mighty virtue, efficacy, and influence upon our practice: which consideration should much engage us to regard it, applying it as an instrument of making ourselves good, and consequently of becoming happy. Good example is, as I say, of exceeding advantage to practice upon many accounts.

1 Examples do more compendiously, easily, and pleasantly inform our minds, and direct our practice, than precepts, or any other way or instrument of discipline. Precepts are delivered in an universal and abstracted manner, naked, and void of all circumstantial attire, without any intervention, assistance, or suffrage of sense; and, consequently, can have no vehement operation upon the fancy, and soon do fly the memory; like flashes of lightning, too subtle to make any great impression, or to leave any remarkable footsteps, upon what they encounter; they must be expressed in nice terms, and digested in exact method; they are various, and in many disjointed pieces conspire to make up an entire body of direction: they do also admit of divers cases, and require many exceptions,

<sup>b</sup> Μεγίστη δὲ ὁδὸς πρὸς τὴν τοῦ καθήκοντος εὕρεσιν καὶ ἡ μελέτη τῶν θεοπνεύστων γραφῶν. ἐν ταύταις γὰρ καὶ αἱ τῶν πράξεων ὑποθήκαι εὐρίσκονται, καὶ οἱ βίοι τῶν μακαρίων ἀνδρῶν ἀνάγραπτοι παραδεδομένοι, οἷον εἰκόνες τινὲς ἡμψυχοὶ τῆς κατὰ Θεὸν πολιτείας, τῷ μιμήματι τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἔργων πρόκεινται.—Bas. ad Greg. Ep. ii. [Opp. Tom. iii. p. 72 E.]

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or restrictions, which to apprehend distinctly, and retain long in memory, needs a tedious labour, and continual attention of mind, together with a piercing and steady judgment. But good example, with less trouble, more speed, and greater efficacy, causes us to comprehend the business, representing it like a picture exposed to sense, having the parts orderly disposed and completely united, suitably clothed and dressed up in its circumstances; contained in a narrow compass, and perceptible by one glance, so easily insinuating itself into the fancy, and durably resting therein: in it you see at once described the thing done, the quality of the actor, the manner of doing, the minute seasons, measures, and adjuncts of the action; with all which you might not perhaps by numerous rules be acquainted; and this in the most facile, familiar, and delightful way of instruction, which is by experience, history, and observation of sensible events. A system of precepts, though exquisitely compacted, is, in comparison, but a skeleton, a dry, meagre, lifeless bulk, exhibiting nothing of person, place, time, manner, degree, wherein chiefly the flesh and blood, the colours and graces, the life and soul of things do consist; whereby they please, affect, and move us: but example imparts thereto a goodly corpulency, a life, a motion; renders it conspicuous, specious, and active, transforming its notional universality into the reality of singular subsistence. This discourse is verified by various experience; for we find all masters of art and science explicating, illustrating, and confirming their general rules and precepts by particular examples. Mathematicians demonstrate their theorems by schemes and

diagrams, which in effect are but sensible instances; SERM.  
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orators back their enthymemes (or rational argumentations) with inductions, (or singular examples;) philosophers allege the practice of Socrates, Zeno, and the like persons of famous wisdom and virtue, to authorize their doctrine: politics and civil prudence is more easily and sweetly drawn out of good history, than out of books *De Republica*. Artificers describe models, and set patterns before their disciples, with greater success, than if they should deliver accurate rules and precepts to them. For who would not more readily learn to build, by viewing carefully the parts and frame of a well-contrived structure, than by a studious inquiry into the rules of Architecture; or to draw, by setting a good picture before him, than by merely speculating upon the laws of perspective; or to write fairly and expeditely, by imitating one good copy, than by hearkening to a thousand oral prescriptions; the understanding of which, and faculty of applying them to practice, may prove more difficult and tedious, than the whole practice itself as directed by a copy? Neither is the case much different in moral concernments; one good example may represent more fully and clearly to us the nature of a virtue, than any verbose description thereof can do: in sooner time, and with greater ease, we may learn our duty by regarding the deportment of some excellent person, than by attending to many philosophical discourses concerning it. For instance\*, if we desire to know

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\* For instance: Take the life of the younger Cato described by the pen of some good historian, and therein see how

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what faith is, and how we should rely upon the divine Providence, let us propose to our consideration the practice of Abraham; wherein we may

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faithfully, diligently, and discreetly, he discharged the several offices wherein he was employed by the Commonwealth. With what incorruptness and integrity he managed the public revenues committed to his inspection; how equally and impartially he administered justice; with what sincerity, prudence, and courage, he advised, and delivered his suffrage in the senate. How magnanimously he forbore to bribe and flatter the people in petition of dignities; how patiently he contested with the rage of the abused multitude; and gallantly sustained their ingrateful affronts and repulses. How, neither daunted with fear of danger, nor allured by temptation of private advantage, he singly embraced, and constantly adhered to the interests of justice, and public good: how warily he observed, wisely detected, and resolutely withstood the pestilent designs of factious citizens. Daring in the open senate, and face to face, to impeach of treason the great Cæsar, conqueror of so many provinces, and master of so many legions: to check and reprove the then greater Pompey, in the flower of his glory, and height of his fortunes; and to refuse disdainfully the affinity with base design offered and solicited by him; behold him upon all occasions, at all times, in all places; in peace and war; in the senate, in the forum, in the army; in the field, upon the sea, over wild deserts, and parched sands, with invincible courage and unwearied constancy, to his utmost power, and to his last gasp, defending the law, liberty, and honour of his country, against tyrannical encroachments; and I dare say, you shall thereby better understand the duties, and qualifications of a good citizen, than by perusing Aristotle's *Politics*, or turning over and over Plato's discourses *De Republica*. It was Xenophon's observation, confirmed by his own experience, that the memory of Socrates his conversation did greatly profit those who had been used to his acquaintance:

see the father of the faithful leaving a most pleasant country, the place of his nativity, and unquestionless most dear unto him under that notion; deserting his home and fixed habitation, his estate and patrimony, his kindred and acquaintance, to wander he knew not where in unknown lands, with all his family, leading an uncertain and ambulatory life in tents, sojourning and shifting among strange people, devoid of piety and civility, (among Canaanites and Egyptians,) upon a bare confidence in the Divine protection and guidance: we may see him, aged ninety-nine years, sensible of his own natural impotence, and an equal incapacity in his consort as to such purposes, yet with a steady belief assuring himself, that from those dead stocks a numerous progeny should spring, and that he, who by all power of nature was unable to beget one child, should, by virtue of God's omnipotent word, become the father of a mighty nation: we may see him upon the first summons of the Divine command, without scruple or hesitancy, readily and

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(Καὶ τὸ ἐκείνου μεμνησθαι μὴ παρόντος οὐ μικρὰ ὠφέλει τοὺς εἰσθότας τε αὐτῷ συνεῖναι, καὶ ἀποδεχομένους ἐκείνον<sup>1</sup>). And like to it that of Seneca, that the crowds of philosophers that followed the same wise and virtuous person derived more of their ethics from his manners than from his words: (Plus ex moribus, quam ex verbis Socratis traxit<sup>2</sup>). And he that shall reflect upon the story of his gallant behaviour, when he was by malicious envy accused, condemned, and persecuted to death, may perhaps be more informed thereby, than by all the subtle discourses he ever made concerning death, and the state of the soul succeeding it. But to use more authentic and approved instances.—MS. bearing the date: Aug. 20, 1661.

<sup>1</sup> Mem. Soc. iv. 1. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. xi.



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cheerfully yielding up his only son (the sole ground of his hope and prop of his family, to whose very person the promise of multiplication was affixed) to be sacrificed and slain; not objecting to his own reason the palpable inconsistency of counsels so repugnant, nor anxiously labouring to reconcile the seeming contrariety between the Divine promises and commands; but resolved as it were (with an implicit faith in God) to believe things incredible, and to rely upon events impossible: contemplating these things, let us say what discourse could so livelily describe the nature of true faith, as this illustrious precedent doth.

Again, he that would learn how to demean himself in resisting the assaults of temptation, let him perpend that one carriage of Joseph; of him, together withstanding the courtships of an attractive beauty, and rejecting the solicitations of an imperious mistress, advantaged by opportunities of privacy and solitude; when the refusal was attended with extreme danger, and all the mischiefs, which the disdain of a furious lust disappointed, of an outrageous jealousy provoked, of a loving master's confidence abused, could produce; and all this by one of meanest condition, in a strange place, where no intercession, favour, or patronage of friends could be had, no equal examination of his cause might be expected; of him doing this, merely upon principles of conscience, and out of fear of God; (saying, *How can I do this great evil, and sin against God?*) and he that considers this example, how can he be ignorant of his duty in the like case?

Gen.  
xxxix. 9.

Again, would we learn wisdom, constancy, and

resolution in the conduct of honest and worthy SERM.  
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ward prevarications of his own most intimate friends and nearest relations, complying with the wicked humours and desires of the people ; in sustaining many other perplexities and crosses ; all which, notwithstanding, he with insuperable resolution happily achieved his glorious undertaking : and will not this example, attentively regarded, beyond the power of any other means or method, explain to us the way of industry, courage, and perseverance in good and worthy, though high and difficult enterprises ?

One instance more, and that of all most pertinent to our occasion : Would you be instructed how faithfully to discharge the ministerial, or any other office ? With a steadfast attention then behold the excellent pattern of St Paul ; consider how in all his designs he zealously and singly aimed at the honour and service of God, neglecting his own safety, quiet, credit, and all worldly accommodations for the advancement of them : how affectionately he tendered the good and welfare of those, the care of whose spiritual condition was commended to him, using all his skill, care, and strength in promoting their edification ; declaring himself for their good to be content, not only for a time to be absent from the Lord, being deprived of that happiness which he otherwise impatiently groaned for, and was fully assured of ; but desirous, as it seems, to be secluded for ever from his blissful presence, by a dreadful *Anathema*, for their sake : how prudently, meekly, and humbly he demeaned himself toward them ; becoming all things to all men, forming himself into all allowable shapes and colours : undergoing all sorts of cen-

sure and imputations, (of a despicable, an ignorant, a foolish person ;) tempering his speech and deportment to their capacities and needs, bearing their miscarriages, and complying with their weaknesses ; parting freely with his own just liberty, pleasure, and satisfaction, for their spiritual advantage : how generously he despised his own profit and ease, refusing that supply he might with all reason and equity have required from them ; choosing to maintain himself with the labour of his own hands, and the sweat of his brows, that he might render the Gospel nowise burdensome or offensive to them : how vigilantly and courageously he withstood the mischievous endeavours of false brethren, and treacherous seducers ; earnestly contending for the Church's peace and quiet against factious spirits, and for the substantial truths of the Gospel against the pernicious devices of heretics and false teachers : how patiently he sustained all manner of pains, griefs, travels, wants, losses, hazards, distresses, disappointments, affronts, and reproaches, for the honour of God, the benefit of his spiritual children, the discharge of his duty, and satisfaction of his conscience : these things, I say, regard, and then tell me, if he might not reasonably inculcate this admonition, Imitate me ; and if his example be not of rare use to instruct us, how faithfully we should, in our respective charges and employments, demean ourselves. I might, in like manner, instance how excellent a rule of devotion the practice of the Royal Prophet may be unto us ; how Elias's practice might teach us to be zealous champions for truth and righteousness ; how they who would be good judges, or honest

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patriots, may receive direction from the carriage of Samuel, Daniel, and Nehemiah<sup>c</sup>. But I proceed to say that further,

2 Good examples do not only inform, but they persuade and incline our reason to good practice, commending it to us by plausible authority; a way of reasoning the most plain, easy, and suitable to all men's capacities: less subject to error and doubt than any other in particular cases; whereby, as it is always more easy to know what is good and fit, so commonly it is most safe; there being few, who can so well discern what is good, as they may rest in the judgments of others. For that wise and virtuous persons do any thing, is a very probable argument, that we are obliged and concerned to do the like; seeing such persons may in all their actions be supposed to have an unbiassed regard to the rules of truth and justice. He therefore who can say, that Abraham, or David, or St Paul did so in such a case, supposeth that he hath no small reason to do the like; it is accounted pardonable, yea almost commendable, to err with such persons; because it is done with good appearance of reason, seeing such persons were themselves unlikely to err: *Will you, saith Cicero, commemorate to me the Scipios, and the Catos, and the Læliuses, and say they did the same thing; though the thing displeases me, yet I cannot withstand the authority of such men: their authority is so great, that it can cover even the suspicion of a fault<sup>d</sup>.* It is obvious in

<sup>c</sup> Ὑπομονῆς οὖν διδάσκαλος ἄριστος ὁ τοῦ μακαρίου Ἰωβ βίος, ἀνεξικακίας ὁ τοῦ Μωϋσέως, πραότητος ὁ τοῦ Δαβὶδ, &c. Chrys. [Orat. ci. Opp. Tom. v. p. 656.]

<sup>d</sup> Africanos mihi, et Catones, et Lælios commemorabis? et eos fecisse idem dices? quamvis res mihi non placeat: tamen contra

temporal concernments, how great a stroke this way of discourse hath ; how boldly men adventure their dearest interests in following such; whom they probably deem honest, and able to guide them : for instance, in travelling, if one being ignorant or doubtful of his way happen to meet a person, whom he conceives able, and nowise concerned or disposed to mislead him, he without scruple follows him, and confidently relies on his direction. In like manner, all good men in the way of virtuous practice tending directly toward happiness, (our common journey's end ;) it being their design, their interest, and their endeavour not to mistake the way, not to deflect from the right and nearest course thereto, men are apt to think it reasonable and safe to accompany in their progress, or to press after them in their steps : and surely, next to a clear and certain rule, there is not any more rational warrant for practice, and consequently no better inducement thereto, than such good precedents. Further,

3 Examples do excite our passions, and impel them to the performance of duty. They raise hope, they inflame courage, they provoke emulation, they urge upon modesty, they awaken curiosity, they affect fancy, they set in motion all the springs of activity. It may not be amiss to shew how, particularly,

1 They raise hope, by discovering to us and assuredly proving the feasibility of matters propounded, or the possibility of success in undertaking good designs, and that by the best and most

*hominum auctoritatem probare non potero.—Magna est hominum auctoritas, et tanta, ut etiam delicti suspicionem tegere possit.—Cic. in Verr. III. [90, 209.]*

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convincing of arguments, experience. Nothing so depresseth hope and advanceth despondency, as an apprehension of impossibility, or, which is equivalent thereto, an extreme difficulty (appearing to surmount our present forces) in the business to be attempted : of such a conceit desperation seemeth a reasonable consequence. For, *Τὰ ἀδύνατα διώκειν, μανικὸν*, *It is a madness to aim at impossibilities*<sup>e</sup>; and such, considering the great infirmity of human nature, its strong propensions to evil, and averse-ness from good, together with the manifold impediments and allurements objecting themselves in the way of good practice, all duties as barely represented in precepts, and pressed by rational inducements, might seem to be, if good example did not clearly demonstrate them to be possible, yea sometimes facile<sup>f</sup>; even those, which upon a superficial view do seem most difficult, and insuperable by our weak endeavour. The stoical doctrine, which described a fine and stately portraiture of virtue, and inculcated very strict rules, (a close following of God and nature, a perfect victory over self, the subduing all passions, and overruling all corporeal appetites : an entire freedom, composure, and tranquillity of mind ; a total indifference in respect of fortune and all external events, with the like duties, rarely practised, although, upon all accounts, acknowledged conformable to reason,) was therefore by most rejected as useless, or ex-

<sup>e</sup> [M. Ant. v. § 17.]

<sup>f</sup> Chrys. in Gen. Orat. xi. Tom. i. p. 69. [Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ τῶν ἁγίων ἡμῖν ἀπάντων τοὺς βίους καὶ τὴν πολιτείαν διὰ τῶν θείων γραφῶν ἀνάγραφτον καταλέλοιπεν ἢ τοῦ Πνεύματος χάρις, ἵνα μαθόντες, ὡς τῆς αὐτῆς ὄντες ἡμῖν φύσεως ἅπαντα τὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς κατώρθωσαν, μὴ ῥαθυμώμεν περὶ τὴν ταύτης ἐργασίαν.]

ploded as ridiculous, as being presumed to propound matters purely imaginary and unpracticable; yet he that had seen this doctrine in great measure exemplified by Zeno, the first master of it, would have had no such reason to condemn it, nor to despair of practising according to it, if he would seriously endeavour it: exemplified, I say, by Zeno, whereof we have an illustrious testimony from a solemn decree of the Athenians: *Whereas Zeno, the son of Mnaseas the Cittican, having many years professed philosophy in this city, and as well in all other things hath demeaned himself like a good man, as particularly exhorting the young men, who went to be instructed by him, hath provoked them to virtue and sobriety; withal exhibiting his own life a pattern of the best things answerable to the discourses he used to make; it is therefore auspiciously decreed by the people, that Zeno the son of Mnaseas be solemnly praised and crowned (according to the usage) with a golden crown; and that a monument be erected for him at the public charge in the Ceramicum<sup>s</sup>, (the place where those were interred who had bravely exposed their lives for public defence). This was indeed a noble attestation and a comely respect exhibited to a virtuous conversation; making in some measure a satisfaction for the heinous affront done thereto, when, instead of honouring it*

<sup>s</sup> [Ἐπειδὴ Ζήνων Μνασέου Κιτιεὺς ἔτη πολλὰ κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν ἐν τῇ πόλει γενόμενος ἔν τε τοῖς λοιποῖς ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς ὧν διετέλεσε καὶ τοὺς εἰς σύστασιν αὐτῷ τῶν νέων πορευομένους παρακαλῶν ἐπ' ἀρετὴν καὶ σωφροσύνην παρῶρμα, πρὸς τὰ βέλτιστα παράδειγμα τὸν ἴδιον βίον ἐκθεὶς ἅπασιν, ἀκολουθοῦν ὄντα τοῖς λόγοις οἷς διελέγετο, τύχῃ τῇ ἀγαθῇ δεδόχθαι τῷ δήμῳ, ἐπαινέσαι μὲν Ζήνονα Μνασέου Κιτιέα καὶ στεφανῶσαι χρυσῇ στεφάνῳ κατὰ τὸν νόμον ἀρετῆς ἕνεκα καὶ σωφροσύνης, οἰκοδομῆσαι δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τάφον ἐπὶ τοῦ Κεραμικοῦ δημοσίᾳ.—Diog. Laert. (Vit. Zenon.) vii. 1. 9.]



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with a crown, they rewarded it with a cup of poison, given to the excellent Socrates. Suitably to which testimony, Seneca saith of Cleanthes, that his virtuous practice depended more upon the observation of Zeno's life, than the information of his doctrine. *Zenonem Cleanthes non expressisset, si eum tantummodo audisset. Vitæ ejus interfuit, secreta perspexit, observavit illum an ex formula sua viveret<sup>a</sup>. Cleanthes, saith he, had not so nearly resembled Zeno, if he had only attended to his discourses: he was present to his life, he took notice of his private carriage, he observed whether his practice did suit to his doctrine.* So that Stoicism itself, which speaketh such prodigies, was, it seems, founded not only upon big words, the issues of a speculative fancy, but more upon the good practice of its first master and institutor. And, indeed, he that would effectually persuade the undertaking of any enterprise, must either suppose it, or prove it effectible; and the most easy, the most evident way of proving it is by example. *Men, saith Pliny Junior well, are better instructed by examples, which have in them chiefly this advantage, that they do prove the things may be done which they enjoin<sup>i</sup>. And, Human infirmity, saith Salvian to the same purpose, requires the assistance of example, that it may more easily now perform that which it knows others to have before done: all posterity being admonished by hearing that what hath once been done, may be done again<sup>k</sup>.* And, *The example, saith St Bernard,*

<sup>a</sup> [Ep. vi. 5.]

<sup>i</sup> Melius homines exemplis docentur, quæ in primis hoc in se boni habent, quod approbant, quæ præcipiunt, fieri posse. Plin. Jun. Paneg. [Cap. xlv. 6.]

<sup>k</sup> Adjuvari se hominum exemplis humana optat infirmitas,

*of a work done is a lively and efficacious oration, easily persuading what we intend, by proving that feasible which we strive to persuade unto*<sup>1</sup>. Upon which score we therefore are exceedingly obliged to those holy men, who by their practice have assured us, that the highest duties exacted of us by our Religion (the mortification of unreasonable desires, the suppression of irregular passions, the loving and blessing our enemies, the renouncing worldly vanities and pleasures, the rejoicing in afflictions, the voluntary abdication of our estates in some cases, yea, exposing life itself to inevitable hazard and loss,) are not chimerical propositions of impossible performances ; but duties (if we shall seriously and vigorously apply our endeavours to them, and suffer our hopes to be elevated by their example) really practicable. Piety abstractedly viewed in precept may seem an airy project, a name, a notion ; but it being seen in example will prove a matter substantial, true, and feasible. A direct and pure speculation thereof may dazzle our sight, and dash our hopes ; but as being reflected from persons practising it, we may bear its lustre, and hope to attain it.

2 Examples do inflame courage. So the apostle to the Hebrews signifieth, when to this

quo facilius etiam ipsa nunc faciat, quæ alios fecisse ante cognoscat ; dum admonetur ætas omnis auditu fieri posse, quod factum est.—*Salv. ad Eccl. Cath.* [Barrow here quotes from memory. The first clause is from *Salvian (adv. Avar. Lib. iii. p. 276. Ed. Baluz.)*; the latter from *Cyprian (Ep. i. ad Donat. Opp. p. 4. Ed. Bened.)*]

<sup>1</sup> Sermo quidam vivus et efficax exemplum operis est, facile persuadens quod intendimus, dum factibile probat esse quod suademus.—*Bern. de Resur. [Serm. ii. Opp. Tom. i. col. 908 E.]*

Ex aliorum factis fieri posse credunt, quod forte cum putant fieri non posse pigrescunt.—*Cyp. Ep. i. ii. 2 [?]*

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Heb. vi. 12.

purpose he intimateth, that he mentioned and setteth before them the examples of the patriarchs; that he thereby might excite their courage, and cause them resolutely to undertake that obedience, and patiently to undergo those afflictions, which they performed and sustained; *That, saith he, ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* For that heat, and active spirit, which in some degree resideth in all men's breasts, is by example kindled, as one flame is kindled by the contact or approach of another. How many persons, timorous and averse from dangerous undertakings, have notwithstanding become very bold and adventurous in war, by the discipline and influence of an exemplary valour! It is Plutarch's observation concerning Cæsar's soldiers<sup>m</sup>, that they, who in service under other commanders did not exceed the ordinary rate of courage, nor excel their fellows, did yet when he led them become irresistibly valiant, being animated and inspired by his unparalleled gallantry: and who is there indeed so incurably heartless, so desperately sluggish or stupid, whom the sight of a valiant leader marching before into the mouth of danger, will not infuse fire and vigour into, and instigate forward into a participation of brave adventure? So example doth by a kind of contagion insinuate courage, or inveigle men

<sup>m</sup> [Εὐνοία δὲ καὶ προθυμία στρατιωτῶν ἐχρήσατο τοσαύτη περὶ αὐτὸν, ὥστε τοὺς ἑτέρων μηδὲν ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις στρατείαις διαφέροντας, ἀμάχους καὶ ἀνυποστάτους φέρεσθαι πρὸς πᾶν δεινόν, ὑπὲρ τῆς Καίσαρος δόξης.—Plut. in Vit. Cæs. Opp. Tom. vi. p. 1311. Ed. Steph.]

—Fortis in armis

Cæsareis Labienus erat.

[Lucan, Phars. v. 345.]

thereinto ; beside that it is a kind of daring, and proclaimeth him a dastard that will not imitate it; SERM.  
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which imputation the lowest courage of man can hardly digest, and will therefore, by doing somewhat answerable, strive to decline it.

3 Again : Examples provoke emulation<sup>n</sup>; which is another strong principle of activity ; moving us earnestly to desire, and thence eagerly to pursue, whatever good, privilege, or advantage, we see another to enjoy. To observe another of the same nature and capacities with ourselves to have shone with an illustrious virtue, to be consecrated to posterity by a lasting fame, and to be crowned with glorious rewards above ; what other reflections of thought can it produce in us, than such as these ? Shall he, a man like myself, endued with the same faculties, appetites, and passions ; subject to the same infirmities, temptations, needs, cares, and encumbrances of life ; shall he, by noble dispositions of soul, and worthy performances, render himself highly considerable ; while I, by sordid qualities and unworthy practices, debase and render myself despicable ? Shall he leave behind him monuments of eternal praise, while I do nothing worthy of regard or memory ? Shall he enjoy the favour of the great God, and the comforts of a blessed eternity, but I be wholly deprived of that joyful estate, and plunged into endless sorrows and desperate misery ? Shall a Joseph stoutly

<sup>n</sup> Φύσει γὰρ φιλόκαλον οὖσαν τὴν φύσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰδὼς ὁ Κύριος, καὶ ἀεὶ τῶν κρείττονων διὰ φιλοτιμίαν ἐφιεμένην, ὥσπερ κόσμιά τινα προτέθεικε τοὺς τῶν πατέρων ἀθλοὺς, ἵνα ἕκαστος ἡμῶν πρὸς ἣν ἂν βούληται ἀθλήσῃ ἑαυτὸν μεταρρυθμίζῃ.—Chrys. Orat. ci. Opp. Tom. v. p. 656. Cf. in Gen. Orat. xiii. Tom. i. p. 77. ad Dem. Tom. vi. p. 148.

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resist and overcome the strongest temptations, and I be easily baffled by the least solicitation of vice? Shall a stripling David gloriously triumph over giants, while I basely am vanquished by dwarfs? Shall Job be stripped of all his goods with contentedness, and endure the most grievous pains with patience, while I am discomposed for any small loss, and dismayed by the least cross accident? Shall Abraham here, by his faith and obedience, attain to be called the friend of God, and rest for ever in his glorious and happy bosom, while I deservedly am refused the honour and comfort of that heavenly communion here, and shall hereafter be detruded from that blissful presence, into the dismal mansions of wretched folly and wickedness? Did Paul, once a stubborn Jew, a blind Pharisee, a grievous blasphemer, a bloody persecutor, by a seasonable conversion repair his state, approve himself to God by an eminent zeal for his glory, undergo restless pains, run desperate hazards, and endure all sorts of distresses for the propagation of God's heavenly truth, obtaining thence a never fading crown of glory in heaven, and a perpetual renown upon earth; and shall I then, who from my youth have been educated in the most true and holy Religion, who have by solemn engagements devoted myself thereto, who may without any trouble or danger profess and practise according to that holy discipline, proceed in wicked courses, provoking God's wrath, and attracting his vengeance upon me? No: since the capacities are alike, since the means are common, since the rewards of piety are promiscuously exposed and offered unto all, why should I, by deplorable perverseness or

negligence, suffer myself to be deprived of it and its benefits? Why shall not I become as good, as commendable, as happy as any other man? These are the conceits and voices of natural emulation, that mighty passion (so often, and by many effects it discovereth itself to be) implanted in our original constitution to be as a spur and incentive, stimulating and inflaming us unto the ready undertaking and vigorous pursuit of good purposes; the which, perhaps, hath produced more noble effects than any other passion or inclination of our souls: for all manner of excellency in knowledge, in prowess, in virtue, how often doth it issue from this source<sup>o</sup>! Doth not the admired fame of men notable for learning, (recorded in story, or subject to present observation,) and a jealousy of being surpassed in accomplishments competent to human nature, sharpen the appetite, and rouse the industry of most scholars, whom neither the love of knowledge nor its apparent usefulness could anywise persuade to bear so much toil in acquist thereof? Do not all histories acquaint us, that the most gallant enterprises and exploits of famous warriors have derived their beginning from an emulation of the glory purchased by their ancestors? (wisdom and valour have thus especially been propagated; one man's signal excellency being parent to the like in many others.) And that this passion may, in like manner, be subservient to the production of virtue and piety, is plain enough from parity of reason,

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<sup>o</sup> —Tentanda via est, qua me quoque possim  
Tollere humo.

[Virg. Georg. III. 8.]

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and from experience ; and we have (for further argument thereof) the apostle's practice using it to this purpose : St Paul employed it as an engine for the conversion of his dear countrymen ; whom, by raising in them a jealousy of being outstripped, in God's favour and its effects, by the Gentiles, he endeavoureth to provoke to the embracing of the Christian faith : *I speak to you Gentiles, saith he, inasmuch as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify my office, εἰ πως παραζηλώσω μου τὴν σάρκα, if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.* And St James instigateth us unto fervency of prayer, by minding us, that *Elias was a man of like passions with ourselves ;* yet was able by his prayers to shut and open heaven, to procure barrenness and fertility to the earth. And the apostle Heb. x. 24. to the Hebrews chargeth us, *To consider one another, εἰς παροξυσμὸν ἀγάπης καὶ καλῶν ἔργων, so as to provoke one another (or by mutual emulation to sharpen one another) to charity and good works.*

Rom. xi.  
13, 14; x.  
19.

James v.  
17.

4 Examples do work upon modesty, that preserver and guardian of virtue, as Cicero calls it<sup>p</sup>. For every good action of another doth upbraid, reproach, and shame him who acteth not conformably thereto. Can we without a trembling heart, and blushing forehead, view the practices of the ancient saints, if ours be altogether unlike them ? If they, to please God and secure their salvation, did undergo such prodigious pains in assiduous devotions, abstinences, watchings, and we contrariwise are extremely sluggish, cold, and

<sup>p</sup> Custos vero virtutum omnium, dedecus fugiens, laudemque maxime consequens, verecundia est.—Cic. Part. Rhet. [Cap. xxiii. 79.]

negligent in the performance of our ordinary duties ; if they willingly renounced all sensual complacencies, and we either cherish ourselves in a soft delicacy of life, or wallow in a profane dissolution of manners ; if they, to free themselves from distracting cares, voluntarily disburdened themselves of all needless encumbrances, and we are wholly busy in heaping up wealth, and driving on worldly interests ; if they gladly embraced and endured the sharpest afflictions, and we are terrified by the thought, are overwhelmed by the sense of the least disappointment, or distasteful occurrence ; how can we without extreme regret of mind, and confusion of face, consider their practice, or compare it with ours ? It is a profligate impudence of him that can daily hear and read the stories of their doings, without being deeply sensible, and ashamed at the dissonance appearing between their course of life and his.

5 Example awakens that curiosity, which is natural to us, and of no mean efficacy upon our actions. For whatever we see done, we are apt to be inquisitive concerning it ; why and to what purpose it is done, what the grounds are, and what the fruits of the performance ; especially if the matter seem considerably important, and the action proceedeth from a person deserving respect ; whereof having passed some competent judgment, we are by the same instinct of curiosity further transported into a desire of discerning by our trial and experience whether the event correspondeth to our expectation ; so are we easily induced to imitate the actions of others. By which means as vice ordinarily is conceived and propagated, (men



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by a preposterous and perverse curiosity being inveigled to try what they see others affect or enjoy,) so may virtue also by the same means be engendered and nourished; the general ways of producing and maintaining those contrary habits being alike. As, therefore, it is a great blemish and reproach to human nature that, *We*, as the Satirist truly observeth of us, *have a great proclivity to follow naughty examples*<sup>a</sup>; so there is from hence some amends, that we have also some inclination to imitate good and worthy precedents; the which is somewhat more strong and vigorous, because countenanced and encouraged by the approbation of reason, our most noble faculty.

6 Examples also do please the mind and fancy in contemplation of them, thence drawing a considerable influence upon practice. No kind of studious entertainment doth so generally delight as history, or the tradition of remarkable examples: even those who have an abhorrency or indisposition toward other studies, (who have no genius to apprehend the more intricate subtleties of science, nor the patience to pursue rational consequences,) are yet often much taken with historical narrations; these striking them with a delectable variety of accidents, with circumstantial descriptions, and sensible representations of objects, do greatly affect and delight their fancies; especially the relation of notable adventures and rare accidents is wont to be attended with great pleasure and satisfaction. And such are those which present to us the lives and

<sup>a</sup>

— Dociles imitandis

Turpibus et pravis omnes sumus.

Juv. [Sat. xiv. 40.]

examples of holy men, abounding with wonders of providence and grace : no attempts so gallant, no exploits so illustrious, as those, which have been achieved by the faith and patience, by the prudence and courage of the ancient saints ; they do far surpass the most famous achievements of Pagan heroes. It was, I dare say, more wonderful, that Abraham with his retinue of household servants should vanquish four potent and victorious kings ; and that Gideon with three hundred unarmed men should discomfit a vastly numerous host, than that Alexander with a well-appointed army of stout and expert soldiers should overturn the Persian empire. The siege of Jericho is so far more remarkable, than those most famous ones of Numantia and Saguntus, as it is more strange that the blast of trumpets and the noise of people shouting should demolish walls, than the shaking them with rams, or discharging massy stones against them. And he, that carefully will compare the deeds of Samson and Hercules, shall find, that one true exploit performed by the former doth much in force and strangeness surmount the twelve fabulous labours of the other : no triumphs indeed are comparable to those of piety ; no trophies are so magnificent and durable, as those which victorious faith erecteth : that history therefore which reports the *Res gestæ*, the acts and sufferings of most pious men, must in reason be esteemed not only the most useful, but also the most pleasant ; yielding the sweetest entertainment to well-disposed minds ; wherein we see virtue expressed, not in bare idea only, but in actual life, strength, motion ; in all its beauty and ornaments : than which no spectacle

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7 We may furthermore consider, that God hath provided and recommended to us one example, as a perfect standard of good practice ; the example of our Lord : the which declareth the use and efficacy of good example, as one principal instrument of piety. That, indeed, is the most universal, absolute, and assured pattern ; yet doth it not supersede the use of other examples : not only the valour and conduct of the general, but those of inferior officers, yea, the resolution of common soldiers, do serve to animate their fellows. The Stars have their season to guide us, as well as the Sun ; especially when our eyes are so weak, as hardly to bear the day. Even, considering our infirmity, inferior examples by their imperfection sometime have a peculiar advantage. Our Lord's most imitable practice did proceed from an immense virtue of divine grace, which we cannot arrive to ; it in itself is so perfect and high, that we may not ever reach it ; looking upon it may therefore sometimes dazzle and discourage our weakness : but other good men had assistances in measure, such as we may hope to approach unto ; they were subject to the difficulties, which we feel ; they were exposed to the perils of falling, which we fear : we may therefore hope to march on in a reasonable distance after them ; we may, by help of the same grace, come near in transcribing their less exact copy.

To conclude : Since upon so many accounts we are obliged to follow good examples ; since they are of so great use toward our proceeding in the way to happiness ; thence they conduce to the clear

instruction of our understanding, to the forcibly SERM.  
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inclining our reason, to the vehement excitement of  
our passions, to the delightfully affecting our imagination in subserviency to good practice; let us make that due and profitable use of them, which we should and may do. Let us, with diligent attention perusing the sacred history, meditate upon the lives of holy men therein propounded as patterns of a persevering faith in God, and conscientious obedience to his commandments. Let the light of their exemplary practice in all kind of piety and virtue continually shine upon our souls, to direct our minds, to inflame our affections, to quicken our resolutions, to detect the errors and correct the faults of our lives, that we, imitating their virtuous and pious conversation, may partake of those comfortable rewards, of that joy and bliss whereof they rest possessed. The which God Almighty, and our blessed Saviour, the Author and Finisher of our faith, by his gracious aid and blessing grant unto us; to whom be all glory and praise for ever and ever. Amen.

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Of the two MS. copies of this Sermon, one, and probably the earlier, has this date, Aug. 20, 1661; and, at the end, the following prayer.

He graciously watch over His Church; preserve our King and the Royal Progeny; bless our Students; and protect us this day and all our days from all sin and danger; through Jesus our B. L. and R.

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## SERMON XXXV.

### ABIDING IN CHRIST TO BE DEMONSTRATED BY WALKING AS CHRIST DID.

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I JOHN II. 6.

*He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to  
walk, even as he walked.*

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Rom. viii.

10.

Gal. ii. 20.

Eph. iii. 17.

Gal. iv. 19.

**T**O abide in Christ, to be in Christ, to put on Christ; and reciprocally Christ's being in us, living, dwelling, being formed in us; and the like expressions occurring in holy scripture, do not denote any physical inherence, or essential conjunction between Christ and us, (such as those, who affect unintelligible mysteries rather than plain sense, would conceit,) but only that mutual relation accruing from our profession of being Christ's disciples, our being inserted into his body the Church, being governed by his laws, partaking of his grace, with all the privileges of the Gospel, relying upon his promises, and hoping for eternal salvation from him. By virtue of which relation, we may be said, in a mystical or moral manner to be united to him, deriving strength and sustenance from him, as the members from the head, the branches from the tree, the other parts of the building from the foundation; by which similitudes this mysterious union is usually expressed in scripture: in effect, briefly, to be in, or to abide in Christ, implieth no more, but our being truly in faith and practice Christians;

so that the meaning of St John's words seemeth plainly and simply to be this: Whoever pretends to be a Christian, (that is, to believe the doctrine and embrace the discipline of Christ,) ought to walk (that is, is obliged to order the whole course of his life and actions) as Christ walked, (that is as Christ did live and converse in the world :) or, it is the duty of every one, professing Christianity, to conform his life to the pattern of Christ's life, to follow his example, to imitate his practice. This is the importance of the words, this the subject of our present discourse.

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I For illustration and confirmation of which point, we may observe, that the holy apostles do upon all occasions assume this supposition, when they would persuade their disciples to the practice of any virtue, or performance of any duty; enforcing their exhortations, by representing the practice of Christ as an unquestionable ground of obligation, and an effectual inducement thereto. Hence they incite them to holiness; *But, saith St Peter, as he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: to charity; And walk in love, saith St Paul, as Christ also loved us: to patience; Because, saith St Peter, Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps. And, Let us, saith the apostle to the Hebrews, run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross: to humility; Let, saith St Paul, the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of*

*1 Pet. i. 15.*  
*Eph. v. 2.*  
*1 Pet. ii. 21.*  
*Heb. xii. 1, 2.*  
*Phil. ii. 5, 6, 7.*

SERM. XXXV. *no reputation: to charitable compliance, and inoffensive demeanour toward others ; intimated by St*  
 1 Cor. x. 33; *Paul, when he says, Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved: Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ: and again, Let every one please his neighbour for his good to edification ; for even Christ pleased not himself. Thus do the apostles take all occasion, from the like practice of Christ, to persuade the performance of duty ; and the strength of their argument lieth upon the evidence of this supposition, that all professing themselves Christians are especially obliged to imitate Christ's example. And their authority may be backed and enforced by several reasons.*

2 Doing so hath a reasonableness and decency grounded upon our relations to Christ: it is fit and comely, that the manners of the disciple should be regulated by those of his master; that the servant should not, in his garb and demeanour, dissent or vary from his lord; that the subject should conform his humour to the fashion of his prince; especially that we should thus comply and conform to such a Master, such a Lord, such a Prince, whom (upon highest considerations) by a most voluntary choice, and in a most solemn manner, we have absolutely devoted ourselves unto: this reason our Lord doth himself urge: Ye, saith he to his disciples, *call me Master and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am: if I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought to wash one another's feet.*

John xiii.  
13, 14.

3 Following Christ's example is requisite to demonstrate the sincerity of our faith, love, and

reverence to him. It is the most natural way of testifying affection and respect, to imitate the manners of those persons who are the objects of those acts and dispositions, to esteem what they approve, to delight in what they affect, and consequently (since actions do proceed from affections) to do as they do. Contrary actions are plain arguments of contrary judgments, inclinations, and affections. Who can imagine we sincerely believe in Christ, or heartily love him, or truly honour him, that seeth us to loathe what he liked, or affect what he detested; to condemn what he prized, or value what he despised; to neglect what he pursued, or embrace what he avoided? But if our lives resemble his, any man will thence collect our respect and affection to him: this argument our Saviour doth also intimate: *By this, saith he, shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye love one another; that is,* John xiii. 35. it will be an evident sign and strong argument, that ye really do believe in, love, and honour me, if ye imitate me in my charity.

4 By pretending to be Christians we acknowledge the transcendent goodness, worth, and excellency of our Saviour; that he was incomparably better and wiser than any person ever was, or could be; that he always acted with the highest reason, out of the most excellent disposition of mind, in order to the best purposes; and that his practice therefore reasonably should be the rule and pattern of ours. For the best and exactest in every kind is the measure of the rest. All that would obtain exquisite skill in any art or faculty, think best to imitate the works of the best masters therein; a painter, to draw after the pieces of Zeuxis or



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Apelles, of Raphael or Titian; an orator, to speak in the style of Cicero or Demosthenes; a soldier, to emulate the military achievements of Hannibal or Cæsar: in like manner, reason requireth, if we would live well and happily, that we should endeavour to conform our practice to that of our Saviour, the most perfect mirror of all virtue and goodness.

Matt. iii.  
15.

Luke xi.  
46.

5 The practice of our Saviour did thoroughly agree with his doctrine and law; he required nothing of us which he did not eminently perform himself. He fulfilled in deed, as well as taught in word, all righteousness. He was not, *Ignava opera, philosopha sententia*<sup>a</sup>; like those masters of philosophy, so frequently taxed and derided by the Satirists; who, by a horrid garb, supercilious looks, and loud declamations, would seem to discountenance those vices which themselves practised; nor like those hypocritical lawyers in the Gospel, who laded other men with heavy burdens, such as themselves would not touch with one of their fingers: No, he imposed nothing on us which he did not first bear upon his own shoulders: the strictness of his life did, in all respects, correspond with the severity of his precepts, or rather did indeed much exceed them. They therefore who pretend to believe his doctrine, and avow themselves bound to observe his law, are consequently engaged to follow his practice, in which his doctrine and law are signally exemplified.

<sup>a</sup> [Ego odi homines ignava opera et philosopha sententia.—Aul. Gell. xiii. 8.]

Οὐδὲν γὰρ διδασκάλου ψυχρότερον ἐν λόγοις φιλοσοφούντος μόνον.—Chrys. [In Act. Hom. i. Opp. Tom. iv. p. 610.]

Ὅσων τὸ βῆμα τοῦ τρόπου κατήγορον.—Greg. Naz. [Carm. Lib. ii. sect. 1, c. 11, v. 38. Opp. Tom. ii. p. 676.]

6 It being the design of divine goodness, SERM.  
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in sending our Saviour, to render us good and happy, to deliver us from sin and misery, to instruct us in the knowledge and excite us to the practice of all virtue, and thereby to qualify us for the enjoyment of a blessed immortality; effecting all this in a way agreeable to our natural condition and capacity; there could not be devised any more powerful means, or more convenient method, of accomplishing those excellent purposes, than by propounding such an example, and obliging us to comply therewith: the which may appear, 1. by considering, in general, the advantage and efficacy that good example is apt to have upon practice; 2. by weighing the peculiar excellency of our Saviour's example above all others, in order to those ends; and, 3. by surveying the particular instances of imitable goodness represented in the life of our Saviour.

1 Good example is naturally an effectual instrument of good practice; for that it doth most compendiously, pleasantly, and easily instruct; representing things to be done at one view, in a full body, clothed with all their modes and circumstances; it recommends them to us by the most plain and plausible way of reasoning, (and withal the most sure and safe,) the authority of wise and good men; it encourageth by evidently declaring the practicableness of rules prescribed; it kindleth and rouseth men's courage, by a kind of contagion, as one flame doth kindle another; it raiseth a worthy emulation of doing laudable things, which we see done; or of obtaining a share in the commendations and rewards of virtue. It urgeth modesty,

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breeding shame and regret in them who act contrarily thereto; it awakeneth curiosity, thereby producing a desire to make trial of what it proposeth; it affecteth and pleaseth the fancy, thereby insinuating an approbation, admiration, and liking of the good things which it representeth: briefly, it exciteth and engageth all our passions, setting on work all those powerful springs of activity; it consequently is, in its own nature, an efficacious mean of good practice. This we may in general say of all good example; but,

2 More especially the example of Christ doth, in efficacy and influence upon good practice, surpass all others; upon several accounts.

First, In that it is a sure and infallible rule, an entire and perfect rule of practice; deficient in no part, swerving in no circumstance from truth and right, which privileges are competent to no other example. The practice of the best men is not always to be imitated, nor ever absolutely as a certain ground of action; it is to be (so far as we have ability) considered, examined, and compared to more certain rules, (the divine laws and the principles of right reason,) according to their agreement with which they are to be followed: they are indeed (before trial of the case) probable arguments of what is done by them being good and lawful; they do outweigh slender and obscure reasonings about the goodness of things; they may, when opportunity, leisure, or ability of further inquiry and judgment about things are wanting, serve to direct us; but they are not thoroughly sure rules, or perfect measures of our duty. We should beware lest we be seduced even by holy persons; and,

therefore, with circumspection and caution should peruse their story, and contemplate their demeanour<sup>b</sup>; whereof those which are explicitly commended, or allowed by the divine judgment, we may, being assured that we are in the same circumstances, safely follow, (taking them for monitories, encouragements, and excitements to our duty:) but those that are directly condemned by the same sentence, or apparently devious from God's law, we as carefully should avoid; such as are of a doubtful and unaccountable nature we are to suspend about, and not to ground upon; nor to argue from the fact to the rightfulness of them; the safest way being always (as we are able) to have recourse to the simple, plain, and perspicuous precepts of God, and dictates of reason. For the best men have been always subject to errors and infirmities; the fountain of original corruption in them was never so dried up, or closely stopped, but that some impure streams have bubbled forth; the fire of natural concupiscence was never so utterly quenched, but that sometimes it would blaze, or smoke out in bad actions; that intestine enemy, the flesh, was never thoroughly subdued, nor the body of sin quite slain and mortified in any other mortal man. Good men have ever had some foul spots, or deforming wrinkles, appearing in the beauteous face of their conversation; they have had their inequalities and indispositions of humour, their ebbs of devotion, their fits of sloth, their wanton freaks, their slips often, and sometimes their

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<sup>b</sup> It was ill said of Seneca: Catoni ebrietas objecta est: facilius efficiet, quisquis objecerit, hoc crimen honestum, quam turpem Catonem. [De Tranq. An. Cap. xv. 15.]

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falls; they have been subject to be deluded by mistake, to be surprised by inadvertency, to be transported by passion, to be swayed by temper, to be biassed by interest, to be allured by temptation into false and unwarrantable proceedings; they might sometimes fail in the substance, oftener in the degree, in the manner, in the circumstances of action; we find them often complaining of their proneness to do amiss, bemoaning the wretched frailty of their state; yea, often repenting and bitterly mourning for their actual transgressions: there hardly is any saint, recorded in scripture, without some blemish in his actions; which shews our weakness, and engageth us to be wary. They were, indeed, endowed with sufficient competences of divine light, and graces suitable to their private needs, or to the public exigences of their times, places, occasions, and affairs; but not with the perfection and extreme degrees thereof, requisite to preserve them from all miscarriage; so that we are not always, or in all cases, to conform our actions to their examples: we must not learn to equivocate of Abraham; nor to circumvent of Jacob; nor to be cholerick of Moses, (so as in our excess of passion to break the tables of the divine law;) nor of Eli to be fondly affectionate or indulgent to our relations; nor of David to utter uncharitable imprecations; nor to dissemble of St Peter; nor of St Paul to revile magistrates. The use we are to make of many practices of most eminently pious men, is not to be misguided by them into wrong paths; not by them to authorize or excuse our presumptuous misdeeds; but to make us to admire and to rely upon the divine mercy, which so

graciously did overlook and pardon their offences; SERM. XXXV.  
to provoke us to an imitation of their repentance;  
to render us watchful in shunning those rocks, upon  
which persons so skilful in the conduct of their  
lives have dashed; to engage us to humility, by  
considering so manifest arguments of our frailty,  
and our being obnoxious to greater and more fre-  
quent miscarriages.

But as to our Saviour's example, the case is  
quite different; whatever in his life was in its own  
nature imitable by us, which did not exceed our  
natural powers, nor disagree with our condition  
and quality<sup>c</sup>: whatever he as man, in a private  
capacity, as subject to the divine law, with re-  
gard thereto, performed, we may with all free-  
dom, confidence, and security, imitate. Nor can  
so doing incur any danger of error or guilt;  
for we cannot, without great folly and impiety,  
suspect any fault or imperfection in his most  
pure, righteous, and innocent life: *He was holy,* Heb. vii. 26.  
*harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners;*  
*He was a lamb without blemish and without spot;* 1 Pet. i. 19.  
*He was in all points tempted as we are, yet with-* Heb. iv. 15.  
*out sin; He did no sin, nor was any guile found* 1 Pet. ii. 22.  
*in his mouth; God gave him of his Spirit not* John iii. 34.  
*by measure.* These are the voices and elogies  
of the sacred oracles concerning him. The hea-  
venly extraction even of his humanity derived no  
original contagion from our polluted stock, and  
rendered him free from the common incentives of  
evil concupiscence. The inseparable presence of

<sup>c</sup> He did miracles as God, he commanded as Christ, he did  
many heroical things in discharge of his office, &c. These things  
we cannot or may not imitate.

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Acts x. 38.

the Divinity with him, (*For God was with him, as St Peter expressed it,*) and the unrestrained effusion of the Holy Spirit upon him, did preserve him from all defilements of infectious conversation in this world; a clear evidence of divine light always shining in his soul directed him infallibly in the paths of truth and righteousness: no tempest of cross accidents without, nor any estuations of internal passion, could discompose the steady calm and serenity of his mind; no allurements of worldly pleasure, nor temptation of profit, could pervert his practice, or seduce his heart; being inflamed with most intense love of God, and entire charity to men: so that his example must needs be a perfect rule and sure direction to us. Which consideration cannot but yield great encouragement and comfort in following him; freeing us from all anxious doubt and suspicion of mistake in our spiritual progress; like the presence of a sure guide to the bewildered traveller; like the appearance of a star to the weather-beaten mariner; like that miraculous pillar of fire, which safely conducted the wandering Israelites through the unknown and unfrequented passages of a wild desert. But further,

Secondly, The peculiar excellency of our Lord's example appears, in that he was, by the divine Providence, to this very purpose designed and sent into the world, as well by his practice as by his doctrine to be the guide and master of holy life and obedience to all men; and did accordingly propound to himself this end of his actions, that he might be imitated by his disciples. So he declareth himself as to some considerable passages of his life; and thence, by reasonable inference, we

may suppose the same of the rest, so far as they SERM.  
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might be conducive to the same end; especially, since of some performances no other, or no so probable account can be given, as that they were done for exemplarity: for why should he fast, who had no sins to be repented of, no rebellious flesh to be tamed, no intemperate desires to be mortified, no coldness of devotion to be enlivened thereby? And why did he offer himself to be baptized, who had no original stain to be cleansed of, no fault to be forgiven, no want of special grace to be conferred? Why, but, by his exemplary fulfilling all righteousness, to teach us ready obedience to all divine institutions, and peaceable compliance with all laudable customs? So an ancient writer wisely descanteth upon those practices of our Saviour: *He was, saith that writer, baptized, and fasted, not because he had need of any cleansing or fasting, who in nature was pure and holy; but that he might attest to the truth of St John, and might exhibit a pattern to us*<sup>d</sup>. What induced him to condescend to such a misbeseeming employment to appearance, as the washing of his disciples' feet, he doth himself tell us: *If I then, saith he, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you.* This was his professed scope and drift, in that admirable deportment of his to teach us humility,

<sup>d</sup> Ἐβαπτίσθη δὲ καὶ ἐνήστευσεν οὐκ αὐτὸς ἀπορυνώσεως, ἢ νηστείας χρεῖαν ἔχων, ἢ καθάρσεως, ὁ τῇ φύσει καθαρὸς καὶ ἅγιος· ἀλλ' ἵνα καὶ Ἰωάννῃ ἀλήθειαν προσμαρτυρήσῃ, καὶ ἡμῖν ὑπογραμμὸν παράσχηται.—[Const. Apost. vii. 22. Cot. Pat. Apost. Tom. i. p. 369.]

Διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ αὐτὸς ἐνήστευσεν, οὐκ αὐτὸς ταύτης δεόμενος, ἀλλ' ἡμᾶς παιδεύων.—Chrys. [in Matt. Hom. xiii. Opp. Tom. ii. p. 81.]



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John xv.  
12.

Matt. xi.  
29.

1 Pet. ii.  
21.

Acts vii.

35.  
Ps. cv. 23;

lxxviii.  
70, 71.

Jer. i. 5.

charity, and condescension toward the meanest of our brethren. What did those exuberant instances of charity practised by him import? This especially, that we should imitate them: hither he drives them: *This, saith he, is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.* Why was he in his disposition so meek and gentle, in his conversation so humble and lowly? To this purpose, that we might of him learn those excellent qualities: *Learn of me, saith he, for I am meek and lowly in heart.* And St Peter saith, *That Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps;* signifying that he designed his patience to be exemplary to us. If then our Saviour, in his humility, his charity, his meekness, his patience, intended his life to be exemplary, and expressly propounded it as such; then certainly, in his devotion, his self-denial, his justice, in all other virtues, he had the same intention; and what he intended, God designed to be; and what God designed to be was doubtless eminently conducive to the end designed; and therefore our Saviour's life was most exemplary. Other saints, indeed, were of very exemplary conversation; but either proved to be so, according to ordinary course of Providence, without any peculiar designation thereto, (their free choice conspiring with God's grace in producing good works shining before men,) or, at most, by a restrained determination to some particular time, place, or people; as Moses was chosen and appointed to conduct the Israelites; *David was taken from the sheepfold, and following the ewes great with young, to feed Jacob God's people, and Israel his inheritance;* Jeremy was sanctified

from his birth, and ordained to be a prophet of the nations in his time; and St Paul was separated from the womb to be a preacher of the Christian faith; these, and such like eminent persons, Almighty God, in his goodness, was pleased to raise up, to be, in their generations, as it were, partial and temporary saviours, as by declaring his will, and revealing his truth to men, so by guiding them with a remarkable example: these burning and shining lamps (as St John the Baptist is called<sup>a</sup>) were, indeed, like lamps set up in some particular families, with a competent lustre, to dispel the present darkness, shining within their definite sphere, and for a determinate time: but our Saviour, like the Sun fixed in a higher orb, was ordained with a perpetual and unconfined splendour to illuminate the universe, to cause a general and everlasting day of healthful and comfortable knowledge over the face of the whole earth. He was *That true light, which en-* John i. 9.  
*lighteneth every man coming into the world; He* Luke ii.  
*was prepared before the face of all people, to be a* 31, 32.  
*light to lighten the nations;* (not Israel only, but the nations indefinitely, or all nations.) He was Heb. ii. 10.  
ordained, not commander of a single regiment, or party, but captain-general of all mankind, to conduct all those who were disposed to follow him, by a victorious obedience, into that triumphant estate of everlasting joy and happiness. His example doth belong unto us all without exception, by divine ordination; for *We, all of us, were* (to Rom. viii.  
use St Paul's expression) *predestinated to be con-* 29.  
*formed to the image of God's Son; that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.* So it was, and

<sup>a</sup> Ὁ λύχνος ὁ καίόμενος καὶ φαίνων.—John v. 35.

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so it became the infinite goodness and philanthropy of God, to bestow upon mankind one perfectly good example, inviting to all virtue, and so fit to countervail all those many bad ones, wherewith we converse, enticing to vice; to set forth, among so many imperfect ones, one accomplished piece of his heavenly workmanship, able to attract the eyes and ravish the hearts of all men with admiration of its excellent worth and beauty; to offer to our view some discernible representation of his invisible perfections<sup>1</sup>; that so we might better be induced and inured to apprehend, love, reverence, and imitate himself by contemplation of that most exquisite image of him; to give an evident proof that the highest virtue is not unpracticable, that human nature, by aid and guidance of the divine Spirit, may arrive to the sublimest pitch of perfection in goodness: in fine, to expose such a common, sweet, and lovely pattern, as we with assurance, joy, and comfort may follow.

Thirdly, Our Saviour's example is especially influential upon practice, in that it was by an admirable temperament more accommodated for imitation than any others have been; that the perfect copy of his most holy life seems more easy to be transcribed, than the ruder draughts of other holy men: for though it were written with an incomparable fairness, delicacy, and evenness; not slurred with any foul blot, not any where declining from exact straightness; yet were the lineaments thereof exceedingly plain and simple; not by any gaudy flourishes, or impertinent intrigues, rendered difficult to studious imitation; so that even women

<sup>1</sup> Ἄ γὰρ ὁ ἐκεῖνος ποιῇ, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ.—John v. 19.

and children, the weakest and meanest sort of people, as well as the most wise and ingenious, might easily perceive its design, and with good success write after it. His was a gentle and steady light, bright indeed, but not dazzling the eye; warm, but not scorching the face of the most intent beholder: no affected singularities, no supercilious morosities, no frivolous ostentations of seemingly high, but really fruitless performances; nothing that might deter a timorous, discourage a weak, or offend a scrupulous disciple, is observable in his practice: but, on the contrary, his conversation was full of lowliness and condescension, of meekness and sweetness, of openness and candid simplicity; apt to invite and allure all men to approach toward it, and with satisfaction to enjoy it. He did not seclude himself into the constant retirements of a cloister, nor into the further recesses of a wilderness, (as some others have done,) but conversed freely and indifferently with all sorts of men, even the most contemptible and odious sort of men, publicans and sinners; like the Sun, with an impartial bounty, liberally imparting his pleasant light and comfortable warmth to all. He used no uncouth austerities in habit or diet; but complied, in his garb, with ordinary usage, and sustained his life with such food as casual opportunity did offer; so that his indifferency in that kind yielded matter of obloquy against him from the fond admirers of a humorous preciseness. His devotions (though exceedingly sprightly and fervent) were not usually extended to a tedious and exhausting durance, nor strained into ecstatical transports, charming the natural senses, and over-

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powering the reason ; but calm, steady, and regular, such as persons of honest intention and hearty desire (though not endued with high fancy, or stirring passion) might readily imitate. His zeal was not violent or impetuous, except upon very great reason, and extraordinary occasion, when the honour of God, or good of men, was much concerned. He was not rigorous in the observance of traditional rites and customs, (such as were needlessly burdensome, or which contained in them more of formal show than of real fruit,) yet behaved himself orderly and peaceably, giving due respect to the least institution of God, and complying with the innocent customs of men ; thereby pointing out unto us the middle way between peevish superstition and boisterous faction ; which as always the most honest, so commonly is the most safe and pleasant way to walk in. He delighted not to discourse of sublime mysteries, (although his deep wisdom comprehended all,) nor of subtle speculations and intricate questions, such as might amuse and perplex, rather than instruct and profit his auditors ; but usually did feed his auditors with the most common and useful truths, and that in the most familiar and intelligible language ; not disdaining the use of vulgar sayings and trivial proverbs, when they best served to insinuate his wholesome meaning into their minds. His whole life was spent in exercise of the most easy and pleasant, yet most necessary and substantial duties ; obedience to God, charity, meekness, humility, patience, and the like ; the which, that he might practise with the greatest latitude, and with most advantage for general imitation, he did

not addict himself to any particular way of life, but disentangled himself from all worldly care and business; choosing to appear in the most free, though very mean condition; that he might indifferently instruct by his example persons of all callings, degrees, and capacities; especially the most, that is, the poor; and might have opportunity in the face of the world to practise the most difficult of necessary duties; lowliness, contentedness, abstinence from pleasure, contempt of the world, sufferance of injuries and reproaches. Thus suited and tempered by divine wisdom was the life of our blessed Saviour, that all sorts of men might be in an equal capacity to follow him, that none might be offended, affrighted, or discouraged; but that all might be pleased, delighted, enamoured, with the homely majesty and plain beauty thereof. And in effect so it happened, that ordinary people (the weakest, but sincerest and unprejudiced sort of men) were greatly taken with, most admired and applauded his deportment; many of them readily embracing his doctrine, and devoting themselves to his discipline; while only the proud, envious, covetous, and ambitious scribes and lawyers rejected his excellent doctrine, scorned the heavenly simplicity and holy integrity of his life.

Fourthly, The transcendent excellency of our Lord's example appeareth, in that it is attended with the greatest obligations, (of gratitude and ingenuity, of justice, of interest, of duty,) mightily engaging us to follow it. For it is not the example of an ordinary or inconsiderable person, of a stranger, of one indifferent or unrelated to us; but of a glorious prince, of heavenly extraction, (the first-

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born Son of the Almighty God, sole heir of eternal Majesty,) of our Lord and Master, to whom we are for ever bound by indispensable bands of duty and obedience; of our great Captain, who hath undertaken to subdue our enemies, and hath obliged us to follow his conduct, in a holy warfare against them, by most solemn sacraments and vows; of our best Friend, from whom we have received the greatest favours and benefits imaginable; of our most gracious Saviour, who, for our sake, hath voluntarily sustained most bitter pains and shameful contumelies; having sacrificed his dearest heart-blood to redeem us from intolerable slaveries, and from extremities of horrible misery; of him, to whom, in all respects, we do owe the highest respect, love, and observance that can be. Now it is the nature and property both of respect and love (such as upon so many grounds we owe to him) to beget, in the person respecting and loving, an endeavour, answerable to the degrees of those dispositions, of conforming to, and resembling the qualities and manners of the person respected or beloved. We see how readily children do comply with the customs of their parents and tutors; servants of their masters and patrons; subjects of their princes and governors, with a studious earnestness composing themselves to express in their carriage, not only their good or their indifferent fashions and manners, but even their most palpable deformities and vices; insomuch, that a whole family, a city, a nation, may be debauched from its sobriety, or reformed from its dissoluteness, even instantly, by the example of one person, who, by his place, power, and authority, challengeth ex-

traordinary reverence from men: and much greater influence hath hearty love to transform our manners into an agreement with the manners of him we love: *What a man loves, that he imitateth, so much as lies in his power*, saith Hierocles<sup>8</sup> truly. For love being founded on a good esteem, and a benevolent inclination thence resulting, engageth the affectionate person to admire the qualities of him he affecteth, to observe his deportments, to make the most advantageous construction of what he doeth; to fancy he doeth all things with best reason and discretion; to deem, therefore, that all his actions deserve and require imitation: hence doth love either find, or soon produce, a competent similitude in the parties, (a similitude of mind, of will, of inclination, and affection; an *Eadem velle et nolle*;) it doth forcibly attract, as to a vicinity of place and converse, so to an agreement of affections and actions; it uniteth the most distant, it reconcileth the most opposite, it turneth the most discordant natures into a sweet consent and harmony of disposition and demeanour. We then having the greatest reason both to honour and love our Saviour, surely his example, being duly studied and considered by us, must needs obtain a superlative influence upon our practice, and be very powerful to conform and assimilate it to his.

These considerations may suffice to shew the peculiar excellency of our Saviour's example in virtue and efficacy upon our practice; the same more abundantly might be deduced from a survey of the most considerable particulars, in which we

<sup>8</sup> Ὁ γὰρ ἀγαπᾷ τις, καὶ μιμεῖται, ὅσον αὐτῷ οἶόν τε.—[In Aur. Carm. Com. p. 28.]



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may and ought to imitate him. But the time will not suffer us to launch forth into so vast a sea of discourse. I shall only, therefore, from the premises exhort, that if any earnest desire of happiness, any high esteem of virtue, any true affection to genuine sanctity do lodge in our breasts, we should apply this most excellent means of attaining them; the study and endeavour of imitating the life of our Lord. If we have in us any truth and sincerity, and do not vainly prevaricate in our profession of being Christ's disciples, and votaries of that most holy institution, let us manifest it by a real conformity to the practice of him who is our Master, and Author of our faith. If we have in us any wisdom, or sober consideration of things, let us employ it in following the steps of that infallible Guide, designed by Heaven to lead us in the straight, even, and pleasant ways of righteousness, unto the possession of everlasting bliss. If we do verily like and approve the practice of Christ, and are affected with the innocent, sweet, and lovely comeliness thereof, let us declare such our mind by a sedulous care to resemble it. If we bear any honour and reverence, any love and affection to Christ; if we are at all sensible of our relations, our manifold obligations, our duties to our great Lord, our best Friend, our most gracious Redeemer; let us testify it by a zealous care to become like to him: let a lively image of his most righteous and innocent, most holy and pious, most pure and spotless life be ever present to our fancies; so as to inform our judgments, to excite our affections, to quicken our endeavours, to regulate our purposes, to correct our mistakes, to direct, amend, and

sanctify our whole lives. Let us, with incessant diligence of study, meditate upon the best of his-  
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 tories, wherein the tenor of his divine practice is represented to us; revolving frequently in our thoughts all the most considerable passages thereof, entertaining them with devout passions, impressing them on our memories, and striving to express them in our conversations: let us endeavour continually to walk in the steps of our Lord, and *To*  
Rev. xiv. 4.  
*follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*; which that we may be able to do, do thou, O blessed Redeemer, draw us; draw us by the cords of thy love; draw us by the sense of thy goodness; draw us by the incomparable worth and excellency of thy person; draw us by the unspotted purity and beauty of thy example; draw us by the merit of thy precious death, and by the power of thy holy Spirit; *Draw*  
Cant. i. 4.  
*us, good Lord, and we shall run after thee. Amen.*

*Almighty God, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life; give us grace, that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit; and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## SERMON XXXVI.

### OF SUBMISSION TO THE DIVINE WILL.

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LUKE XXII. 42.

*Nevertheless let not my will, but thine, be done.*

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THE great controversy, managed with such earnestness and obstinacy between God and man, is this, whose will shall take place, his or ours: Almighty God, by whose constant protection and great mercy we subsist, doth claim to himself the authority of regulating our practice and disposing our fortunes: but we affect to be our own masters and carvers; not willingly admitting any law, not patiently brooking any condition, which doth not sort with our fancy and pleasure: to make good his right, God bendeth all his forces, and applieth all proper means both of sweetness and severity, (persuading us by arguments, soliciting us by entreaties, alluring us by fair promises, scaring us by fierce menaces, indulging ample benefits to us, inflicting sore corrections on us, working in us and upon us by secret influences of grace, by visible dispensations of Providence;) yet so it is, that commonly nothing doth avail, our will opposing itself with invincible resolution and stiffness.

Here indeed the business pincheth; herein as the chief worth, so the main difficulty of religious practice consisteth, in bending that iron sinew; in bringing our proud hearts to stoop, and our sturdy

humours to buckle, so as to surrender and resign SERM.  
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our wills to the just, the wise, the gracious will of  
our God, prescribing our duty, and assigning our  
lot unto us.

We may accuse our nature, but it is our pleasure; we may pretend weakness, but it is wilfulness, which is the guilty cause of our misdemeanours; for by God's help (which doth always prevent our needs, and is never wanting to those who seriously desire it) we may be as good as we please, if we can please to be good<sup>a</sup>; there is nothing within us that can resist, if our wills do yield themselves up to duty: to conquer our reason is not hard; for what reason of man can withstand the infinite cogency of those motives, which induce to obedience? What can be more easy, than by a thousand arguments clear as day, to convince any man, that to cross God's will is the greatest absurdity in the world, and that there is no madness comparable thereto? Nor is it difficult, if we resolve upon it, to govern any other part or power of our nature; for what cannot we do, if we are willing<sup>b</sup>? What inclination cannot we check, what appetite cannot we restrain, what passion cannot we quell or moderate? What faculty of our soul, or member of our body, is not obsequious to our will? Even half the resolution, with which we

<sup>a</sup> [Μὴ δὴ σφάλλωμεν ἑαυτοὺς, ἀγαπητοὶ, ἀδύνατον εἶναι λέγοντες γενέσθαι κατὰ Παῦλόν τινα. τῆς μὲν γὰρ χάριτος καὶ τῶν σημείων ἕνεκεν οὐκέτι Παῦλος ἕτερος ἔσται λοιπόν· τῆς δὲ ἀκριβείας τοῦ βίου, τῶν βουλομένων ἕκαστος τοιοῦτος γένοιτ' ἂν. εἰ δὲ μὴ εἰσι, παρὰ τὸ μὴ βούλεσθαι μόνον.]—Chrys. ad Dem. Orat. xii. Opp. Tom. vi. p. 149. Cf. in 1 Cor. Orat. xvii. [Tom. iii. p. 351.] Tom. v. Orat. xxviii. xliii.

<sup>b</sup> Quodcunque sibi imperavit animus, obtinuit.—Sen. de Ira, ii. 12. [6.]

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XXXVI. pursue vanity and sin, would serve to engage us in the ways of wisdom and virtue.

Wherefore in overcoming our will the stress lieth; this is that impregnable fortress, which everlastingly doth hold out against all the batteries of reason and of grace; which no force of persuasion, no allurement of favour, no discouragement of terror can reduce\*: this puny, this impotent thing

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\* Which the weakest soul is most able to defend against the fiercest assaults, and the finest stratagems of wisdom: For let God exhibit never so many or so great wonders, let him denounce the severest vengeance, let him inflict the most horrible plagues; yet, *I will not* (saith the obdurate man) *I will not let Israel go*; let God appear in the most conspicuous and affrightful manner, thundering out his Law with a voice at which the Earth doth quake; let him enforce it with the sweetest blessings and the saddest curses; let him back it with the assurances of an outstretched arm working many stupendous prodigies both of mercy and of justice; yet will the stiffnecked people rebel against his command and murmur at his Providence; *Let God arise early, sending his Prophets* to instruct and warn them; *Let him spread forth his hands all the day*, employing the most earnest diligence and straining his patience to the utmost in endeavours to convert them from sin, and to save them from ruin; yet what is the result? They tell us in those words, *There is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices; we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart*; let God himself vouchsafe to descend from Heaven and to converse with men; let him in numberless miraculous works display his power and goodness; let him say what never man said, preaching the most admirable doctrine; and do what never man did, practising the rarest virtue; let him tender the richest overtures of grace to those who shall embrace his word, and threaten the dreadfulest executions of justice on those who shall reject it; yet shall he meet with huge numbers of those, who

Exod. v. 2.

xix. 11.  
Heb. xii.  
18.

Deut. iv.  
11; v. 22.

Exod.  
xxxii. 9;  
xxxiii. 3.  
Jer. vii. 13;  
xliv. 4; xi.  
7; xxxii.  
33.  
Isai. lxxv. 2.

Jer. xvi.  
12; ii. 25;  
vi. 16.

it is, which grappleth with Omnipotency, and often in a manner baffleth it: and no wonder, for that SERM.  
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God doth not intend to overpower our will, or to make any violent impression on it, but only to draw it (as it is in the Prophet) with the cords of Hos. xi. 4.  
a man, or by rational inducements to win its consent and compliance: our service is not so considerable to him, that he should extort it from us; nor doth he value our happiness at so low a rate, as to obtrude it on us. His victory, indeed, were no true victory over us, if he should gain it by main force, or without the concurrence of our will; our works not being our works, if they do not issue from our will; and our will not being our will, if it be not free: to compel it were to destroy it, together with all the worth of our virtue and obedience\*; wherefore the Almighty doth suffer himself to be withstood, and beareth repulses from us; nor commonly doth he master our will otherwise, than by its own spontaneous conversion and submission to him<sup>c</sup>: if ever we be conquered, as we shall share in the benefit, and wear a crown; so we

<sup>c</sup> Ἐπεὶ τοῦτο καὶ αὐτὰ διαβάλλει τὰ ἀγαθὰ, εἰ μὴ τοιαύτη αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ φύσις, ὥς καὶ ἐκόντας προσδραμεῖν, καὶ χάριν εἰδότας πολλήν.—Chrys. in 1 Cor. Orat. II. [Opp. Tom. III. p. 251.]

seeing will not regard, and hearing will not understand; Matt. xiii.  
of men resolutely blind, and immoveably fixed in impeni- 13.  
John xii.  
tence. MS. 38.

\* For it is essential to virtue that it be embraced by voluntary choice; nor can that obedience be reckoned to us, which is extorted from us; we should be capable of no praise or reward, God would fail of his homage and best service (which is the free oblation of our heart) if our will were overpowered. MS.

SERM.  
XXXVI.Matt. xi.  
29.

must join in the combat, and partake of the victory, by subduing ourselves: we must take the yoke upon us; for God is only served by volunteers; he summoneth us by his word, he attracteth us by his grace, but we must freely come unto him.

Our will, indeed, of all things is most our own; the only gift, the most proper sacrifice we have to offer; which therefore God doth chiefly desire, doth most highly prize, doth most kindly accept from us. Seeing then our duty chiefly moveth on this hinge, the free submission and resignation of our will to the will of God; it is this practice, which our Lord (who came to guide us in the way to happiness, not only as a teacher, by his word and excellent doctrine, but as a leader, by his actions and perfect example) did especially set before us, as in the constant tenor of his life, so particularly in that great exigency which occasioned these words, wherein, renouncing and deprecating his own will, he did express an entire submission to God's will, a hearty complacence<sup>k</sup> therein, and a serious desire that it might take place.

For the fuller understanding of which case, we may consider, that our Lord, as partaker of our nature, and in all things (bating sin) like unto us, had a natural human will, attended with senses, appetites, and affections, apt from objects incident, to receive congruous<sup>\*</sup> impressions of pleasure and pain; so that whatever is innocently grateful and pleasant to us, that he relished with delight, and thence did incline to embrace; whatever is distasteful and afflictive to us, that he resented with grief, and thence was moved to eschew: to this probably he was liable in a degree beyond our ordinary

*These things are not to be taken as a rule of life, but as a description of the state of mind in which we should be.*

rate; for that in him nature was most perfect, his complexion very delicate, his temper exquisitely sound and fine; for so we find, that by how much any man's constitution is more sound, by so much he hath a smarter gust of what is agreeable or offensive to nature: if perhaps sometimes infirmity of body, or distemper of soul, (a savage ferity, a stupid dulness, a fondness of conceit, or stiffness of humour, supported by wild opinions or vain hopes,) may keep men from being thus affected by sensible objects; yet in him pure nature did work vigorously, with a clear apprehension and lively sense, according to the design of our Maker, when into our constitution he did implant those passive faculties, disposing objects to affect them so and so, for our need and advantage; if this be deemed weakness, it is a weakness connected with our nature, which he therewith did take, and with which, as Heb. v. 2. the Apostle saith, he was encompassed<sup>d</sup>. Such a will our Lord had, and it was requisite that he should have it, that he thence might be qualified to discharge the principal instances of obedience, for procuring God's favour to us, and for setting an exact pattern before us; for God imposing on him duties to perform, and dispensing accidents to endure, very cross to that natural will, in his compliance and acquiescence thereto, his obedience was thoroughly tried; his virtue did shine most brightly; therefore, as the Apostle saith, *He was in all points* Heb. iv. 15. *tempted*; thence, as to meritorious capacity and exemplary influence, *He was perfected through suffering.* ii. 10, 18.

Hence was the whole course of his life and con-

<sup>d</sup> Ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περικείται ἀσθενείαν.—Heb. v. 2.



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versation among men so designed, so modelled, as to be one continual exercise of thwarting that human will, and closing with the divine pleasure : it was predicted of him, *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God* ; and of himself he affirmed, *I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me* : whereas therefore such a practice is little seen in achieving easy matters, or in admitting pleasant occurrences ; it was ordered for him, that he should encounter the roughest difficulties, and be engaged in circumstances most harsh to natural apprehension and appetite ; so that, if we trace the footsteps of his life from the sordid manger to the bloody cross, we can hardly mark any thing to have befallen him apt to satisfy the will of nature.

Heb. x. 7.  
Psal. xl. 7.  
John vi. 38 ; v. 30 ;  
iv. 34.

Nature liketh respect, and loatheth contempt ; therefore was he born of mean parentage, and in a most homely condition ; therefore did he live in no garb, did assume no office, did exercise no power, did meddle in no affairs, which procure to men consideration and regard ; therefore an impostor, a blasphemer, a sorcerer, a loose companion, a seditious incendiary, were the titles of honour and the elogies of praise conferred on him ; therefore was he exposed to the lash of every slanderous, every scurrilous, every petulant and ungoverned tongue.

John vii. 7.

Nature doth affect the good opinion and goodwill of men, especially when due in grateful return for great courtesy and beneficence ; nor doth any thing more grate thereon, than abuse of kindness : therefore could he (the world's great Friend and Benefactor) say, *The world hateth me* ; therefore were those, whom he with so much charity and

bounty had instructed, had fed, had cured of diseases, SERM. XXXVI.  
 (both corporal and spiritual,) so ready to clamour,  
 and commit outrage upon him; therefore could he  
 thus expostulate, *Many good works have I shewed* John x. 32.  
*you from my Father; for which of those works do ye*  
*stone me?* Therefore did his kindred slight him,  
 therefore did his disciples abandon him, therefore  
 did the grand traitor issue from his own bosom; John xiii. 18.  
 therefore did that whole nation, which he chiefly  
 sought and laboured to save, conspire to persecute  
 him with most rancorous spite and cruel misuseage.

Nature loveth plentiful accommodations, and  
 abhorreth to be pinched with any want: therefore  
 was extreme penury appointed to him; he had no  
 revenue, no estate, no certain livelihood, not so Matt. viii. 20; xvii. 27.  
 much as a house where to lay his head, or a  
 piece of money to discharge the tax for it; he  
 owed his ordinary support to alms, or voluntary Luke viii. 3.  
 beneficence; he was to seek his food from a fig  
 tree on the way; and sometimes was beholden for Matt. xxi. 19.  
 it to the courtesy of publicans; *Δι' ἡμᾶς ἐπρώχενσε,* 2 Cor. viii. 9.  
*He was, saith St Paul, a beggar for us.*

Nature delighteth in ease, in quiet, in liberty:  
 therefore did he spend his days in continual labour, Mark vi. 6.  
 in restless travel, in endless vagrancy, going about John iv. 6.  
 and doing good; ever hastening thither, whither Matt. iv. 23; ix. 35.  
 the needs of men did call, or their benefit invite;  
 therefore, *He took on him the form of a servant,* and Acts x. 38.  
 was among his own followers, *As one that minis-* Phil. ii. 7.  
*tereth;* therefore, *He pleased not himself,* but suited Luke xxii. 27.  
 his demeanour to the state and circumstances of Rom. xv. 3.  
 things, complied with the manners and fashions,  
 comported with the humours and infirmities of men.

Nature coveteth good success to its designs

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and undertakings, hardly brooking to be disappointed and defeated in them : therefore was he put to water dry sticks and wash negroes, that is, to instruct a most dull and stupid, to reform a most perverse and stubborn generation ; therefore his ardent desires, his solicitous cares, his painful endeavours for the good of men did obtain so little fruit, had indeed a contrary effect, rather aggravating their sins than removing them, rather hardening than turning their hearts, rather plunging them deeper into perdition, than rescuing them from it ; therefore so much in vain did he, in numberless miraculous works, display his power and goodness, convincing few, converting fewer by them ; therefore, although he taught with most powerful authority, with most charming gracefulness, with most convincing evidence, yet, *Who*, could he say, *hath believed our report ?* Though he most earnestly did invite and allure men to him, offering the richest boons that heaven itself could dispense, yet, *Ye will not*, was he forced to say, *come unto me, that ye may be saved* : although, with assiduous fervency of affection, he strove to reclaim them from courses tending to their ruin, yet how he prospered sad experience declareth, and we may learn from that doleful complaint, *How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but ye would not !* οὐκ ἠθέλησατε, your will did not concur, your will did not submit.

Luke xiii.  
34 ; xix.  
42.

In fine, natural will seeketh pleasure, and shunneth pain : but what pleasure did he taste ? what inclination, what appetite, what sense did he gratify ? How did he feast, or revel ? How,

but in tedious fastings, in frequent hungers, by passing whole nights in prayer and retirement for devotion upon the cold mountains? What sports had he, what recreation did he take, but feeling incessant gripes of compassion, and wearisome roving in quest of the lost sheep? In what conversation could he divert himself, but among those, whose doltish incapacity and forward humour did wring from his patience those words, *How long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?* What music did he hear? What but the rattlings of clamorous obloquy, and furious accusations against him? To be desperately maligned, to be insolently mocked; to be styled a king, and treated as a slave; to be spit on, to be buffeted, to be scourged, to be drenched with gall, to be crowned with thorns, to be nailed to a cross; these were the delights which our Lord enjoyed, these the sweet comforts of his life and the notable prosperities of his fortune: such a portion was allotted to him, the which he did accept from God's hand with all patient submission, with perfect contentedness, with exceeding alacrity, never repining at it, never complaining of it, never flinching from it, or fainting under it; but proceeding on in the performance of all his duty and prosecution of his great designs with undaunted courage, with unwearied industry, with undisturbed tranquillity and satisfaction of mind.

Had indeed his condition and fortune been otherwise framed; had he come into the world qualified with a noble extraction; had he lived in a splendid equipage; had he enjoyed a plentiful estate and a fair reputation; had he been favoured

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Mark i. 13,  
35.

Luke v. 16.  
John iv. 6,

31.  
Luke vi.

12.  
Matt. xiv.  
23; xviii.

12.

Matt. xvii.

17.

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and caressed by men; had he found a current of prosperous success; had safety, ease, and pleasure waited on him; where had been the pious resignation of his will, where the precious merit of his obedience, where the glorious lustre of his example? How then had our frailty in him become victorious over all its enemies; how had he triumphed over the solicitations and allurements of the flesh, over the frowns and flatteries of the world, over the malice and fury of hell? How then could he have so demonstrated his immense charity toward us, or laid so mighty obligations upon us?

Such in general was the case, and such the deportment of our Lord: but there was somewhat peculiar, and beyond all this occurring to him, which drew forth the words of our text: God had tempered for him a potion of all the most bitter and loathsome ingredients that could be; a drop whereof no man ever hath, or could endure to sip; for he was not only to undergo whatever load human rage could impose, of ignominious disgrace and grievous pain; but to feel dismal agonies of spirit, and those *Unknown sufferings*<sup>e</sup>, which God alone could inflict, God only could sustain: *Behold, and see, he might well say, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me; wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.* He was to labour with pangs of charity, and through his heart to be pierced with deepest commiseration of our wretched case: he was to crouch under the burden of all the sins (the numberless most heinous sins and abominations) ever committed by mankind: those foul monsters (our

<sup>e</sup> Δι' ἀγνώστων σου παθημάτων, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς Κύριε.—Lit. Gr.

sins, I say) did all stand before him, in their own horrid shape, and ugly aggravations, thirsting to suck his blood, and gaping to devour him : he was to pass through the hottest furnace of divine vengeance, and by his blood to quench the wrath of heaven flaming out against iniquity : he was to stand, as it were, before the mouth of hell, belching fire and brimstone on his face : his grief was to supply the defects of our remorse, and his suffering in those few moments to countervail the eternal torments due to us : he was to bear the hiding of God's face, and an eclipse of that favourable aspect, in which all bliss doth reside ; a case which he that so perfectly understood, could not but infinitely resent : these things with the clearest apprehension he saw coming on him ; and no wonder that our nature started at so ghastly a sight, or that human instinct should dictate that petition, *Father, if thou wilt, let this cup pass from me* ; words implying his most real participation of our infirmity ; words denoting the height of those sad evils which encompassed him, with his lively and lowly resentment of them ; words informing us, how we should entertain God's chastisements, and whence we must seek relief of our pressures, (that we should receive them, not with a scornful neglect or sullen insensibility, but with a meek contrition of soul ; that we should entirely depend on God's pleasure for support under them, or a releasement from them ;) words which, in conjunction with those following, do shew how instantly we should quash and overrule any insurrection of natural desire against the command or providence of God. We must not take that prayer to signify any purpose in our Lord to

Matt. xxvi.

39.

x

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11.Matt. xxvi.  
53.

shift off his passion, or any wavering in resolution about it; for he could not anywise mean to undo that, which he knew done with God before the world's foundation; he would not unsettle that, which was by his own free undertaking and irreversible decree: he that so often with satisfaction did foretell this event, who with so earnest desire longed for its approach<sup>t</sup>; who with that sharpness of indignation did rebuke<sup>x</sup> his friend offering to divert him from it; who did again repress St Peter's animosity with that serious expostulation, *The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* who had advisedly laid such trains for its accomplishment, would he decline it? Could that heart, all burning with zeal for God and charity to men, admit the least thought or motion of averseness from drinking that cup, which was the sovereign medicine administered by divine wisdom for the recovery of God's creation? No; had he spake with such intent, legions of angels had flown to his rescue; that word, which framed the worlds, which stilled the tempests, which ejected devils, would immediately have scattered his enemies, and dashed all their projects against him: wherefore those words did not proceed from intention, but as from instinct, and for instruction; importing, that what our human frailty was apt to suggest, that his divine virtue was more ready to smother; neither did he vent the former, but that he might express the latter.

He did express it in real effect, immediately with all readiness addressing himself to receive that unsavoury potion; he reached out his hand

<sup>t</sup> Ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα.—Luke xxii. 15.

for it, yielding fair opportunity and advantages to his persecutors ; he lifted it up to his mouth, innocently provoking their envy and malice ; he drank it off with a most steady calmness and sweet composure of mind, with the silence, the simplicity, the meekness of a lamb carried to the slaughter ; no fretful thought rising up, no angry word breaking forth, but a clear patience, enlivened with a warm charity, shining in all his behaviour, and through every circumstance of his passion.

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Such in his life, such at his death, was the practice of our Lord ; in conformity whereto we also readily should undertake whatever God proposeth, we gladly should accept whatever God offereth, we vigorously should perform whatever God enjoineth, we patiently should undergo whatever God imposeth or afflicteth, how cross soever any duty, any dispensation may prove to our carnal sense or humour.

To do thus, the contemplation of this example may strongly engage us ; for if our Lord had not his will, can we in reason expect, can we in modesty desire to have ours ? Must we be cockered and pleased in every thing, whenas he was treated so coarsely, and crossed in all things ? Can we grutch at any kind of service or sufferance ? Can we think much (for our trial, our exercise, our correction) to bear a little want, a little disgrace, a little pain, when the Son of God was put to discharge the hardest tasks, to endure the sorest adversities ?

But further to enforce these duties, be pleased to cast a glance on two considerations : 1. What the will is to which, 2. Who the willer is to whom we must submit.



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I What is the will of God? Is it any thing unjust, unworthy, or dishonourable, any thing incommodious or hurtful, any thing extremely difficult or intolerably grievous, that God requireth of us to do or bear? No: he willeth nothing from us or to us, which doth not best become us and most behove us; which is not attended with safety, with ease, with the solidest profit, the fairest reputation, and the sweetest pleasure.

Two things he willeth; that we should be good, and that we should be happy; the first in order to the second, for that virtue is the certain way, and a necessary qualification to felicity.

1 Thess. iv.  
3.

*The will of God*, saith St Paul, *is our sanctification*: What is that? what, but that the decays of our frame, and the defacements of God's image within us, should be repaired; that the faculties of our soul should be restored to their original integrity and vigour; that from most wretched slaveries we should be translated into a happy freedom, yea, into a glorious kingdom; that from despicable beggary and baseness we should be advanced to substantial wealth and sublime dignity; that we should be cleansed from the foulest defilements, and decked with the goodliest ornaments; that we should be cured of most loathsome diseases, and settled in a firm health of soul; that we should be delivered from those brutish lusts, and those devilish passions, which create in us a hell of darkness, of confusion, of vexation, which dishonour our nature, deform our soul, ruffle our mind, and rack our conscience; that we should be endowed with those worthy dispositions and affections, which do constitute in our hearts a heaven

of light, of order, of joy, and peace, dignify our nature, beautify our soul, clarify and cheer our mind; that we should eschew those practices, which never go without a retinue of woful mischiefs and sorrows, embracing those which always yield abundant fruits of convenience and comfort; that, in short, we should become friends of God, fit to converse with Angels, and capable of Paradise.

God, saith St Paul again, *willeth all men to be saved*: He *willeth not*, saith St Peter, *that any man should perish*. He saith it himself, yea, he sweareth it, *That he hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live*. And what is this will? what, but that we should obtain all the good whereof we are capable; that we should be filled with joy, and crowned with glory; that we should be fixed in an immovable state of happiness, in the perpetual enjoyment of God's favour, and in the light of his blissful presence; that we should be rid of all the evils to which we are liable; that we should be released from inextricable chains of guilt, from incurable stings of remorse, from being irrecoverably engaged to pass a disconsolate eternity in utter darkness and extreme woe? Such is God's will; to such purposes every command, every dispensation of God (how grim, how rough soever it may seem) doth tend. And do we refuse to comply with that good will; do we set against it a will of our own, affecting things unworthy of us, things unprofitable to us, things prejudicial to our best interests, things utterly baneful to our souls? Do we reject the will that would save us, and adhere to a will that would ruin us; a foolish

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1 Tim. ii.

4.  
2 Pet. iii.

9.

Ezek.  
xxxiii. 11.

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and a senseless will, which, slighting the immense treasures of heaven, the unfading glories of God's kingdom, the ineffable joys of eternity, doth catch at specious nothings, doth pursue mischievous trifles; a shadow of base profit, a smoke of vain honour, a flash of sordid pleasure; which passeth away like the mirth of fools, or the crackling of thorns, leaving only soot, black and bitter, behind it?

Eccles. vii.  
6.

But, at least, ere we do this, let us consider whose will it is that requireth our compliance.

Ps. cxlviii.

5.  
— Apoc. iv.  
11.

It is the will of him, whose will did found the earth, and rear the heaven; whose will sustaineth all things in their existence and operation; whose will is the great law of the world, which universal nature in all its motions doth observe; which reigneth in heaven, the blessed spirits adoring it; which swayeth in hell itself, the cursed fiends trembling at it: and shall we alone (we pitiful worms crawling on earth) presume to murmur, or dare to kick against it?

It is the will of our Maker, who, together with all our other faculties, did create and confer on us the very power of willing: and shall we turn the work of his hands, the gift of his bounty, against him?

It is the will of our Preserver, who, together with all that we are or have, continually doth uphold our very will itself; so that without employing any positive force, merely by letting us fall out of his hand, he can send us and it back to nothing: and shall our will clash with that, on which it so wholly dependeth; without which it cannot subsist one moment, or move one step forward in action?

It is the will of our sovereign Lord, who, upon SERM. XXXVI. various indisputable accounts, hath a just right to govern us, and an absolute power to dispose of us: ought we not therefore to say with old Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do to me as it seemeth good to him?* 1 Sam. iii. 18.

Is it not extreme iniquity, is it not monstrous arrogance for us, in derogation to his will, to pretend giving law, or picking a station to ourselves? Do we not manifestly incur high treason against the King of heaven, by so invading his office, usurping his authority, snatching his sceptre into our hands, and setting our wills in his throne?

It is the will of our Judge, from whose mouth our doom must proceed, awarding life or death, weal or woe unto us: and what sentence can we expect, what favour can we pretend to, if we presumptuously shall offend, oppose that will, which is the supreme rule of justice and sole fountain of mercy?

It is the will of our Redeemer, who hath bought us with an inestimable price, and with infinite pains hath rescued us from miserable captivity under most barbarous enemies, that, obeying his will, we might command our own, and, serving him, we might enjoy perfect freedom: and shall we, declining his call and conduct out of that unhappy state, bereave him of his purchase, frustrate his undertakings, and forfeit to ourselves the benefit of so great Redemption?

It is the will of our best Friend; who loveth us much better than we do love ourselves; who is concerned for our welfare, as his own dearest interest, and greatly delighteth therein; who, by innumerable experiments, hath demonstrated an

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Lam. iii.  
33.

excess of kindness to us; who, in all his dealings with us, purely doth aim at our good, never charging any duty on us, or dispensing any event to us, so much with intent to exercise his power over us, as to express his goodness towards us; who never doth afflict or grieve us more against our will, than against his own desire; never, indeed, but when goodness itself calleth for it, and even mercy doth urge thereto; to whom we are much obliged, that he vouchsafeth to govern and guide us, our service being altogether unprofitable to him, his governance exceedingly beneficial to us: and doth not such a will deserve regard; may it not demand compliance from us? To neglect or infringe it, what is it? is it not palpable folly, is it not foul disingenuity, is it not detestable ingratitude?

So doth every relation of God recommend his will to us; and each of his attributes doth no less: for

It is the will of him who is most holy, or whose will is essential rectitude: how then can we thwart it, without being stained with the guilt, and wounded with a sense of great irregularity and iniquity?

It is the will of him, who is perfectly just; who therefore cannot but assert his own righteous will, and avenge the violation thereof: is it then advisable to drive him to that point by wilful provocation; or to run upon the edge of necessary severity?

It is the will of him, who is infinitely wise; who therefore doth infallibly know what is best for us; what doth most befit our capacities and circumstances; what in the final result will conduce

to our greatest advantage and comfort: shall we then prefer the dreams of our vain mind before the oracles of his wisdom? shall we, forsaking the direction of his unerring will, follow the impulse of our giddy humour? SERM.  
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It is the will of him, who is immensely good and benign; whose will thereby can be no other than good-will to us; who can mean nothing thereby but to derive bounty and mercy on us: can we then fail of doing well, if we put ourselves entirely into his hands? are we not our own greatest enemies, in withstanding his gracious intentions?

It is, finally, the will of him, who is uncontrollably powerful; whose will therefore must prevail one way or other; either with our will or against it, either so as to bow and satisfy us, or so as to break and plague us: for, *My counsel*, saith he, *shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.* As to his dispensations, we may fret, we may wail, we may bark at them; but we cannot alter or avoid them: sooner may we by our moans check the tides, or by our cries stop the sun in his career, than divert the current of affairs, or change the state of things established by God's high decree: what he layeth on, no hand can remove; what he hath destined, no power can reverse: our anger therefore will be ineffectual, our impatience will have no other fruit, than to aggravate our guilt and augment our grief. Isai. xlv.  
10.

As to his commands, we may lift up ourselves against them, we may fight stoutly, we may in a sort prove conquerors; but it will be a miserable victory, the trophies whereof shall be erected in hell, and stand upon the ruins of our happiness; Dan. v. 23.

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for, while we insult over abused grace, we must fall under incensed justice: if God cannot fairly procure his will of us in way of due obedience, he will surely execute his will upon us in way of righteous vengeance; if we do not surrender our wills to the overtures of his goodness, we must submit our backs to the strokes of his anger: he must reign over us, if not as over loyal subjects to our comfort, yet as over stubborn rebels to our confusion; for this in that case will be our doom, and the last words God will design to spend upon us;

Luke xix.  
27.

*Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.*

Heb. xiii.  
20, 21.

*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

